

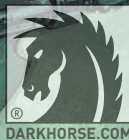
PAUL TOBIN

THE

JOE QUERIO

WITCHER[®]

FOX CHILDREN



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THE
WITCHER[®]



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THE WITCHER[®]

FOX CHILDREN

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The Witcher game and comic book are based on the novels of Andrzej Sapkowski.

THE WITCHER VOLUME 2: FOX CHILDREN

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CHAPTER ONE



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THE REDANIAN-TEMERIAN
BORDERLANDS, NEAR
THE PONTAR DELTA.

SNAP

UP
AND AT 'EM,
DWARF. THERE'S
SOMETHING IN
THE WOODS.

EHH,
GERALT?

LET
ME GRAB
MY AXE.

HOLD ON!
YOU SLEEP IN
JUST THAT LOIN-
CLOTH?

AYE. DIDNAE
WANT MY RAGS
TO TURN RANK.

WHATEVER'S OUT
THERE WILL BE GRATEFUL.
PLUMP SIDE OF DWARF, NO
SWEATY LEATHER TO
PEEL OFF...

THAT'S
JEALOUSY TALKIN'.
YE'RE TALL AND FRAIL--YE
ENVY ME MY **STURDY**
PHYSIQUE.

I'M
ENVOIOUS, SURE,
BUT JUST OF THE
BLIND, ADDARIO,
JUST OF THE
BLIND.



I CANNAE
SEE A DAMNED
THING. CAN YE
FIGHT IN THE
DARK?

A WITCHER IS A
WITCHER.



HRMPH. YOUSE FANCY
YERSELVES **POETS**,
TOO? 'CAUSE **POETS**
DON'T EVER GIVE
STRAIGHT ANSWERS,
EITHER.



I CAN
FIGHT IN THE
DARK.

NOW, CAN
I TRUST A **HORN
PLAYER** IN A **MINERS'
BAND** TO COVER
MY **BACK?**



REST EASY,
GERALT. JUST
'CAUSE I DIDNAE
COVER **MY OWN**
DON'T MEAN I
WON'T COVER
YERS.

YE ASKED ME
TO HELP YE GET
TO NOVIGRAD. I
PROMISED I
WOULD.



SO I'LL
SWEAR IT AGAIN,
ON A **MUG** WITH A
FULL HEAD AND A
DANCIN' GIRL WITH
A FULL BOTTOM,
THAT I, **ADDARIO
BACH**, WILL--

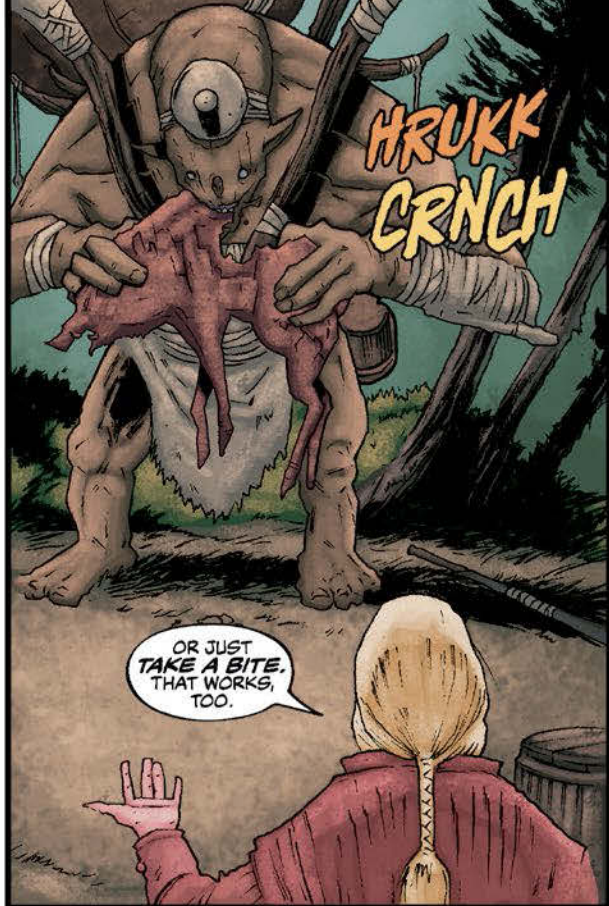






I SUPPOSE WE
COULD TRADE...IN
THE INTEREST OF
FRIENDSHIP. GIVE
US A MINUTE TO
CUT UP THE BOAR
AND WE'LL--

HREKK



OR JUST
TAKE A BITE.
THAT WORKS,
TOO.



HEY! OII
WHERE YE GOIN'?
YE CANNAE EAT HALF
OUR BOAR AND
TODDLE OFF
LIKE SOME--

ROCKSTRIDE
BELLY DONE. GO
SLEEP MAKE.
BOTHER NO.

ADDARIO,
LET THE
TROLL GO.



GOTTA LEARN
TO PICK YOUR
FIGHTS. IT'S LIKE
LOVE--SOMETIMES
YOU NEED TO LET
'EM GO.



BESIDES, BACON'S
NOT SOMETHING YOU
NEED ANY MORE OF.
GOT RESERVES
APLENTY AROUND
YOUR WAIST, AS
I SEE IT.

WINDLEY PORT.





THIS, GENTLEMEN, IS THE **PROPHET LEBIODA**, A NEW-MODEL SHIP IN THE KOVIRI STYLE, BUILT IN THE NOVIGRAD SHIPYARDS AND LAUNCHED NEARABOUT ONE YEAR PAST.

SEEN THIS HERE SLOOP **BEFORE**, HAVE YE? SEEM TO **KEN** A BUNDLE ABOUT HER.



I KNOW **ALL** THERE IS TO KNOW.

I OWN HER, **KEVENARD VAN VLIET**, DEALER IN FINE LEATHER GOODS.



STRANGE PORT O' CALL FOR SUCH A VESSEL--OUT HERE IN THE BOGS. NO **TROUBLE**, I HOPE?



WHY, UH, NO. **NO TROUBLE...** AHH...REPLENISHING SUPPLIES, THAT'S ALL.

HERE IN THE WILDERNESS, YOU CANNOT BE **PICKY** ABOUT YOUR ROUTE, ESPECIALLY WHEN MAKING HASTE TOWARDS A **RESCUE**. OURS IS A RESCUE PARTY, IF YOU MUST KNOW--



MASTER VAN VLIET, YOU **NEEDN'T** DELVE INTO **DETAILS**.

I DON'T SEE THAT THESE **GENTLEMEN** ARE INTERESTED NOR **SHOULD** THEY BE.



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GERALT OF RIVIA.
A SUPPOSED **LEGEND**.
SLAYER OF **MONSTERS**
AND **PRETERNATURAL**
BEINGS.

LATTER'S TRUE.
NEVER THOUGHT OF
MYSELF AS A **LEGEND**,
THOUGH.

SUPPOSED
OR OTHERWISE.



FAIR ENOUGH. A
HUMBLE LEGEND, THEN.
I'M **JAVIL FYSH**. I RUN
A TRADE IN NOVIGRAD--
VARIED SERVICES.

MY
PARTNER,
PETRU
COBBIN.

MASTER
BOXCRAY, CAPTAIN
OF THE **PROPHET**
LEBIODA.

AND THE
HONORABLE
KEVENARD VAN
VLIET, SHIP'S
OWNER--YOU'VE
MET ALREADY.



I SHALL BE PLAIN.
THE **PROPHET'S** SAILING
TO **NOVIGRAD**, AND WE'VE
ROOM ON BOARD FOR
PASSENGERS.

IT'S THE **ONLY**
WAY OUT OF THIS
SWAMP IF YOU'VE
A MIND TO REACH
CIVILIZED
ENVIRONS.

KEEP
TALKING,
MASTER
FYSH.



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OUR FAIR SLOOP IS NO **BEDRAGGLED BARGE**. PASSAGE ON HER REQUIRES **PAYMENT**.

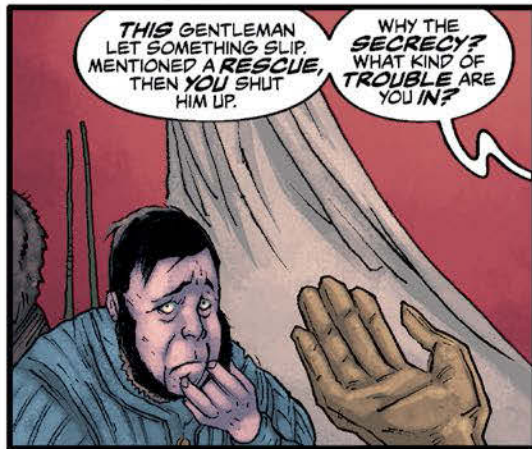
WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO COME AS OUR **ESCORT**? PUT YOUR **BLADES** TO WORK SHOULD THE NEED ARISE?

DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU'RE **HIDING**. COST YOU EXTRA IF I HAVE TO FIGURE IT OUT **MYSELF**.



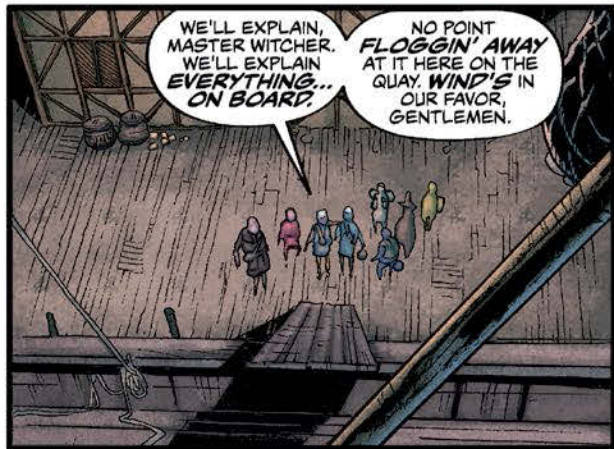
COME AGAIN?

AN "ESCORT"? "IF THE NEED **ARISES**"? A **BEDTIME STORY** YOU PULLED OUT OF YOUR **ASS** AND POURED ON **THICK**.



THIS GENTLEMAN LET SOMETHING SLIP. MENTIONED A **RESCUE**. THEN YOU SHUT HIM UP.

WHY THE **SECRECY**? WHAT KIND OF **TROUBLE** ARE YOU IN?

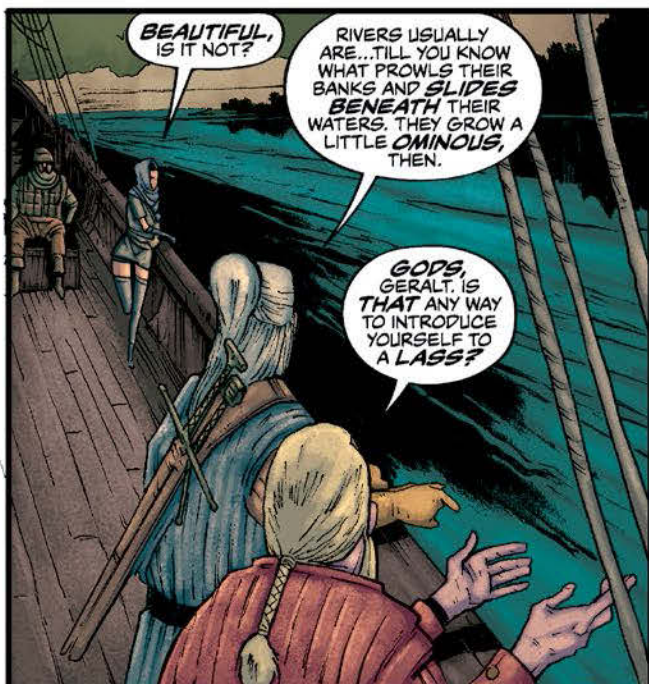


WE'LL EXPLAIN, MASTER WITCHER. WE'LL EXPLAIN **EVERYTHING... ON BOARD**.

NO POINT **FLOGGIN' AWAY** AT IT HERE ON THE QUAY. **WIND'S** IN OUR FAVOR, GENTLEMEN.



"ANCHORS **AWEIGH**!"





GERALT?



SO, THE TRUTH--AS PROMISED.

THIS EXPEDITION... WELL, OUR AIM IS TO **FREE A CHILD**. XYMENA DE SEPULVEDA, BRIANA DE SEPULVEDA'S SOLE DAUGHTER... SHE WAS ABDUCTED.



BRIANA DE SEPULVEDA? THE... UMMM... **ELF**, FROM NOVIGRAD?

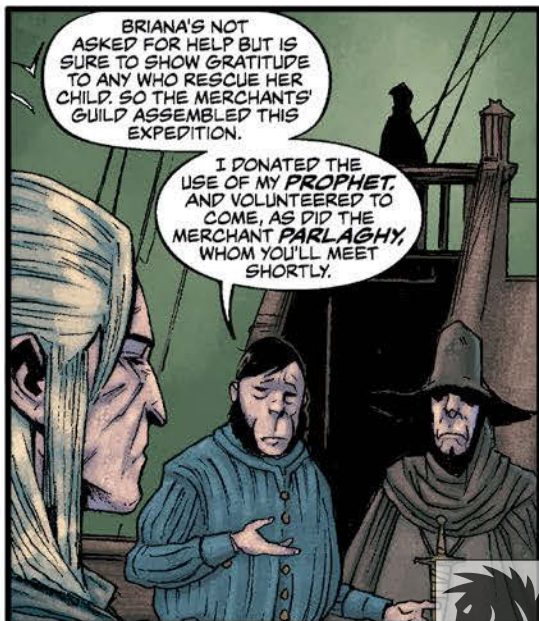
THE FUR TANNERY HEIRESS? HER DAUGHTER'S BEEN KIDNAPPED?



FOR RANSOM?

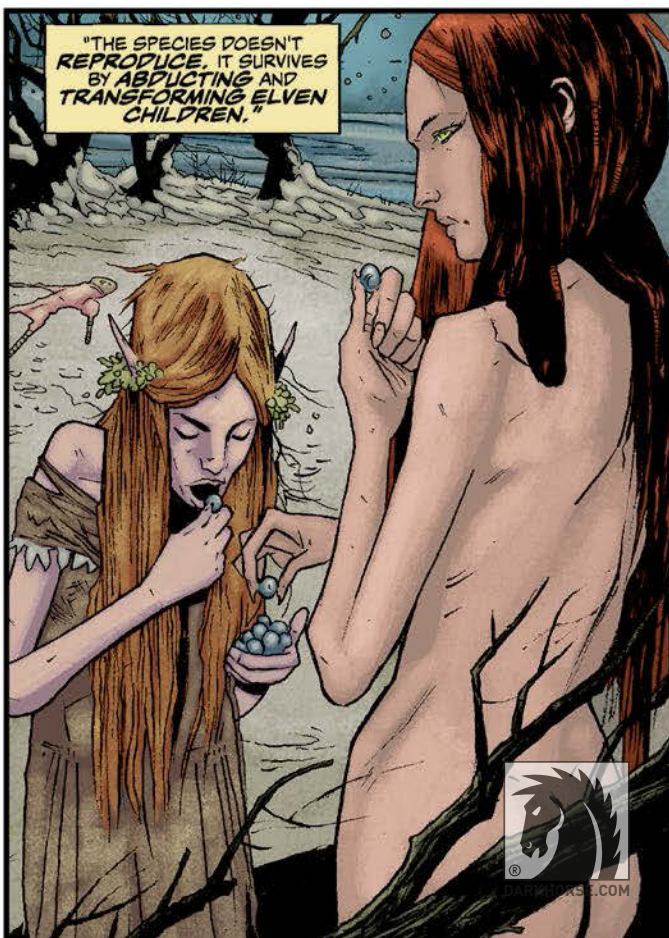
THAT'S JUST IT. NO, YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT, BUT... A **MONSTER** TOOK THE GIRL.

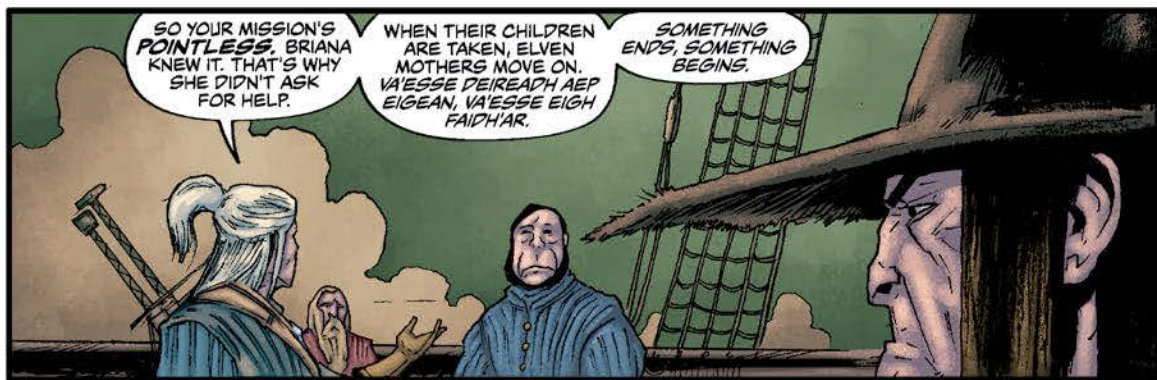
A **VULPESS**, A **SHE-FOX CHANGELING**, THAT IS.

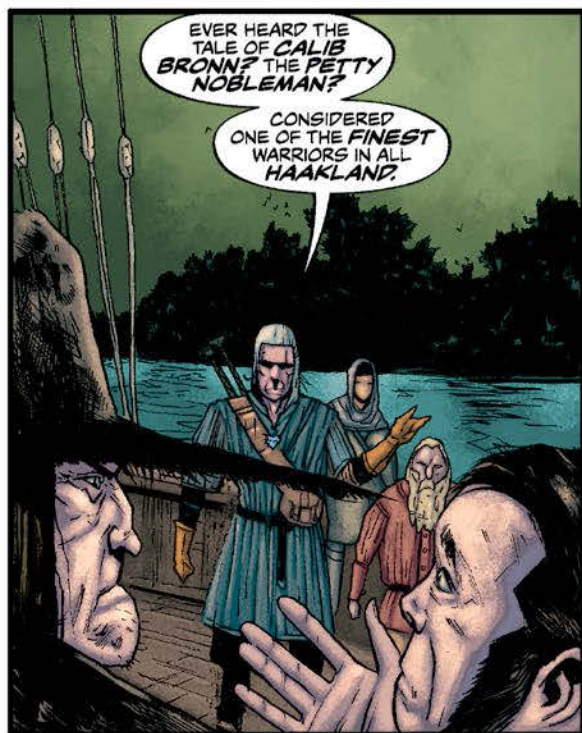
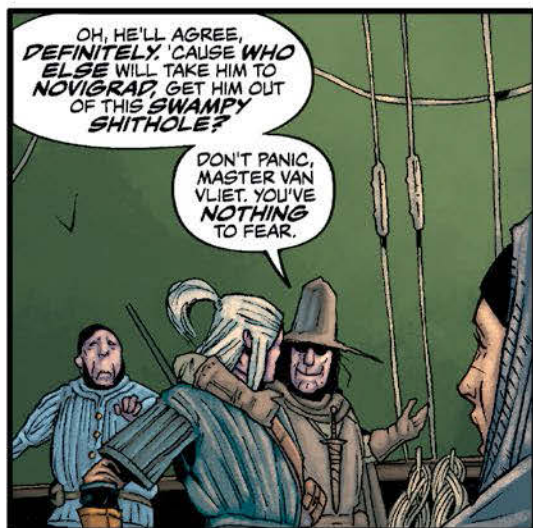


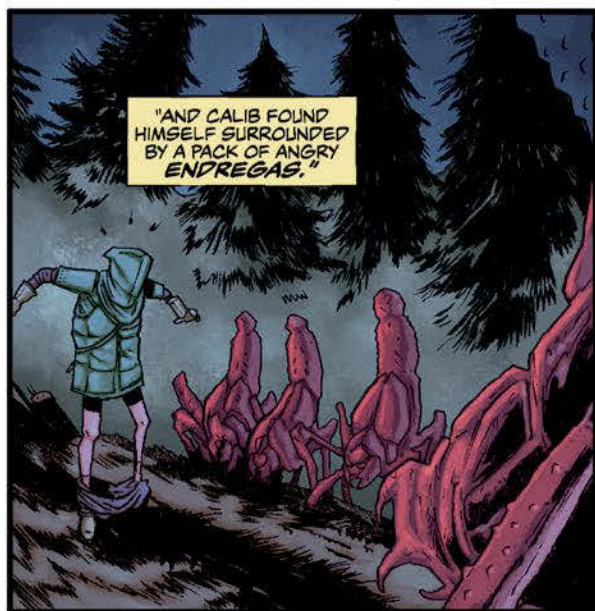
BRIANA'S NOT ASKED FOR HELP BUT IS SURE TO SHOW GRATITUDE TO ANY WHO RESCUE HER CHILD. SO THE MERCHANTS' GUILD ASSEMBLED THIS EXPEDITION.

I DONATED THE USE OF MY **PROPHET**, AND VOLUNTEERED TO COME, AS DID THE MERCHANT **PARLAGHY**, WHOM YOU'LL MEET SHORTLY.





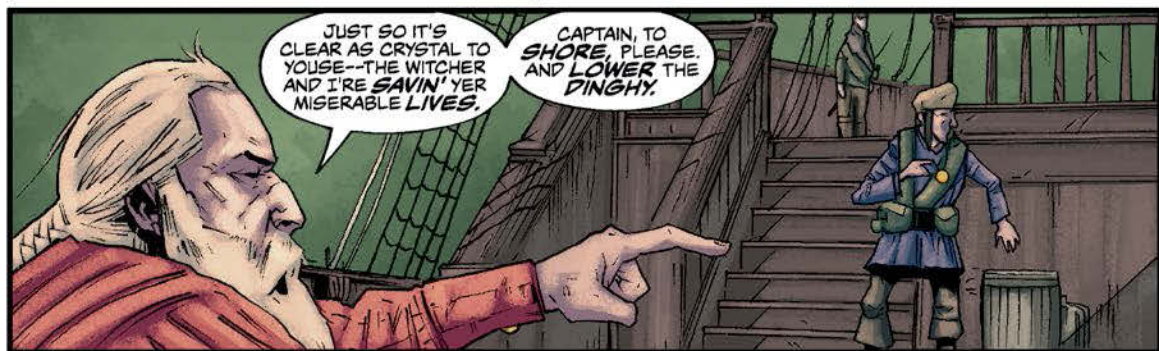
















CHAPTER TWO





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"AND I'M **TELLING** YOU, WITCHER, WE'VE NOTHING TO **FEAR**! WE'RE IN DEEP WATER. FAR FROM THE BANKS. EVEN IF THE VULPESS IS FOLLOWING US, AND WE'VE NO REASON TO THINK SHE IS, SHE CAN'T TOUCH US HERE!"



MASTER WITCHER? WHAT SAY YOU?

THE VULPESS **IS** FOLLOWING US. NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. HERE'S HOW I SEE IT, MASTER VAN VLIET, AND I SEE IT AS IT IS. WE COULD'VE **FREED** HER CUB, SET HER ASHORE. VULPESS MIGHT'VE LET US GO, THEN...

BUT YOU **FUCKING ASSHOLES KILLED THE CUB...SO I SAY WE RUN. RAISE THE SAILS, CAPTAIN. AS MANY AS YOU GOT.**

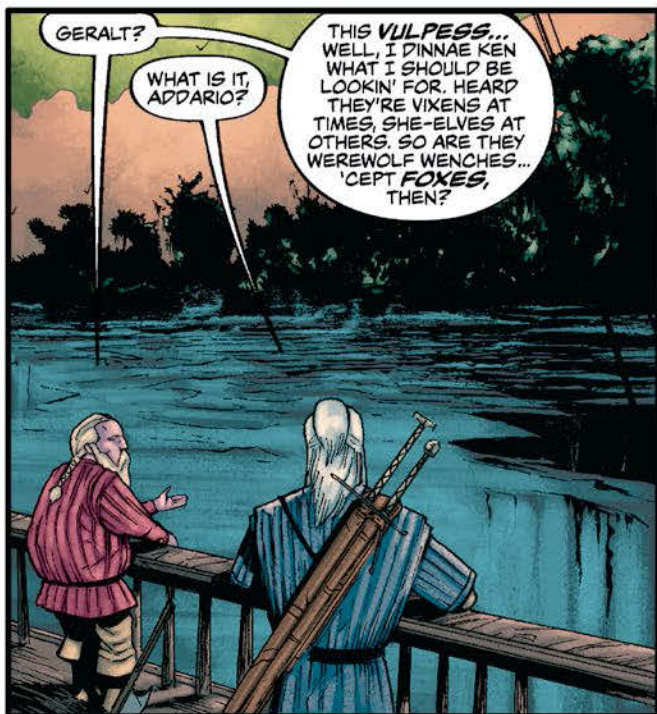
S'POSE WE COULD ADD A TOPSAIL. WE'VE THE WIND FOR IT. BUT IF...THIS VULPESS...WELL... WITCHER, WILL YE PROTECT US?

HONESTLY? RATHER LEAVE YOU TO YOUR FATE. DITCH THIS BOAT AND DITCH THAT PRICK DRINKING HIMSELF STUPID BELOW DECK NEXT TO THE BODY OF THE CHILD HE MURDERED.

I'M LEANIN' THAT WAY **MYSELF**. WORLD LOSES A FEW BLACKGUARDS AND **EEJITS**, IT'LL ONLY BE A BETTER PLACE FOR DECENT, **THINKIN'** FOLK.

HAH! THE FAMED MONSTER SLAYER, ABANDONING FELLOW MEN AT THE MERE HINT OF A BEAST...BUT I DO ADMIT THE NOTION OF FLEEING POSTHASTE-- THAT I SUPPORT.

RAISE ALL YOUR RAGS, BOXCRAY! CATCH THE MAIN CURRENT, BLOW US DOWNRIVER FAST AS SHE'LL GO!



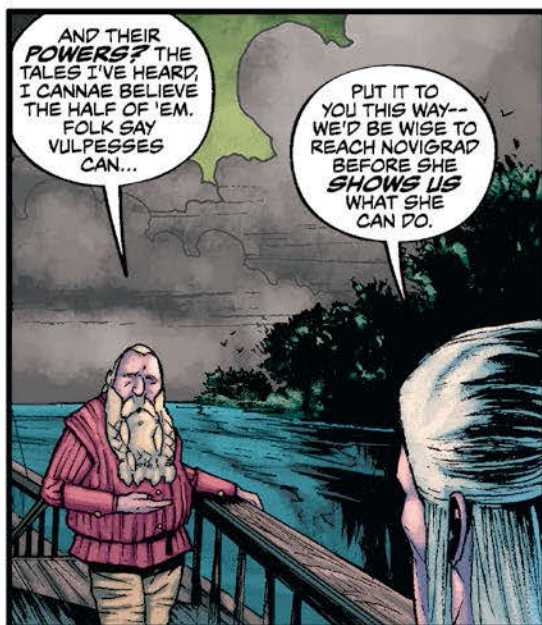
GERALT?

WHAT IS IT, ADDARIO?

THIS **VULPESSE**... WELL, I DINNAE KEN WHAT I SHOULD BE LOOKIN' FOR. HEARD THEY'RE VIKENS AT TIMES, SHE-ELVES AT OTHERS. SO ARE THEY WEREWOLF WENCHES... 'CEPT **FOXES**, THEN?

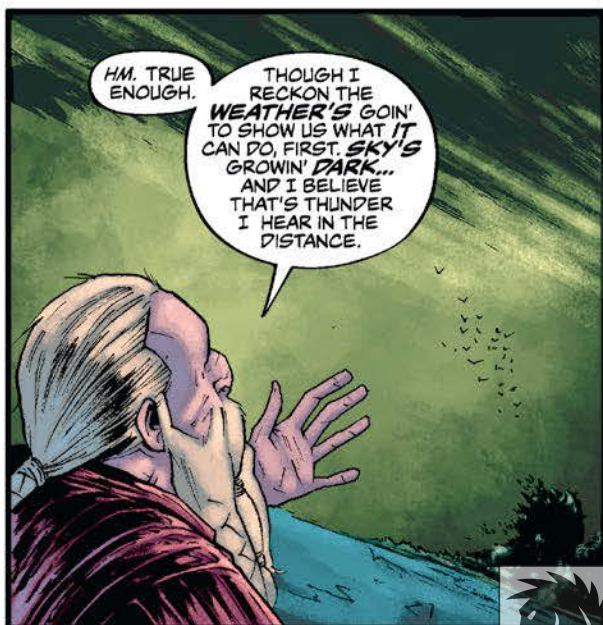


"IT'S DIFFERENT. WEREWOLVES, WEREBEARS, WERERATS--THEY'RE **THERIANTHROPES**--**HUMANS** WHO TRANSFORM INTO **ANIMALS**. **VULPESSES** ARE **ANTERIONS**. **BEASTS**, OR...**BEINGS**, RATHER... THAT ASSUME HUMAN FORM."



AND THEIR **POWERS**? THE TALES I'VE HEARD, I CANNAE BELIEVE THE HALF OF 'EM. FOLK SAY **VULPESSES** CAN...

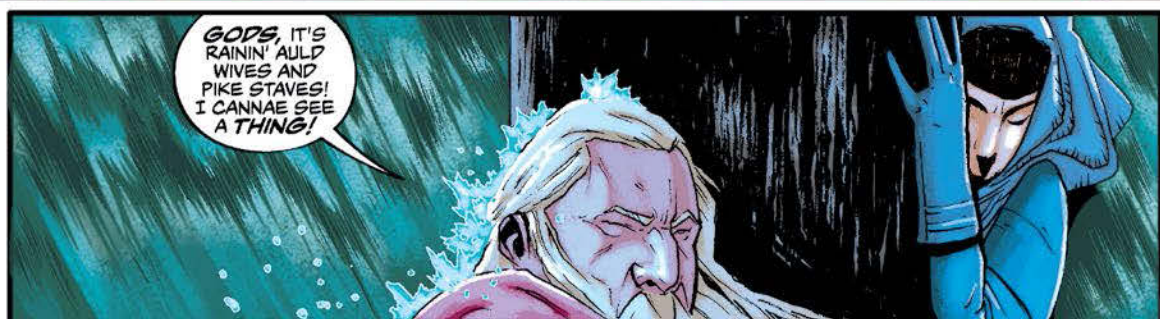
PUT IT TO YOU THIS WAY-- WE'D BE WISE TO REACH NOVIGRAD BEFORE SHE **SHOWS US** WHAT SHE CAN DO.

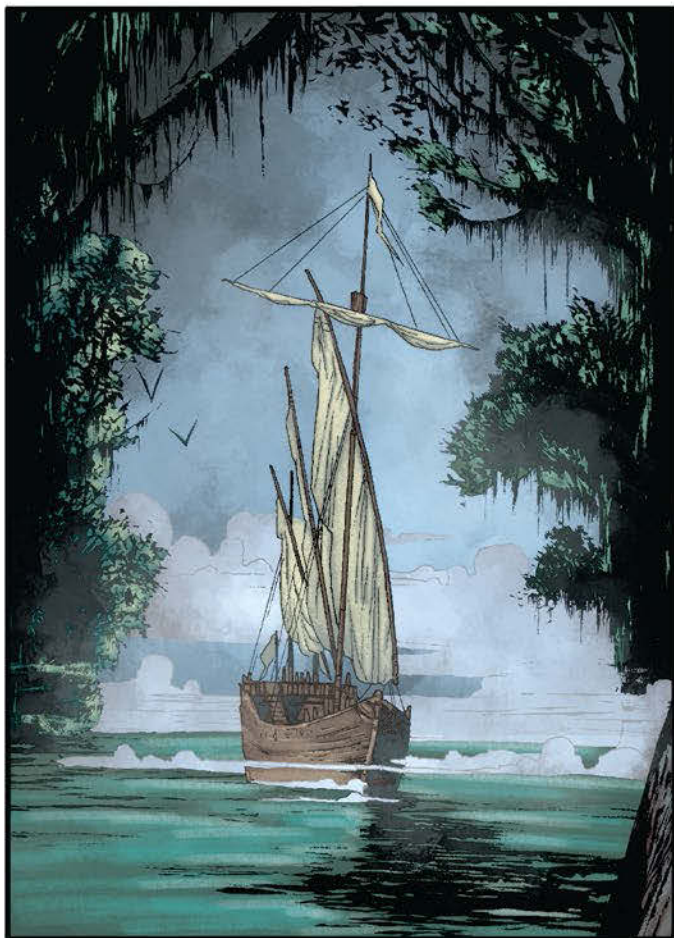


HM. TRUE ENOUGH.

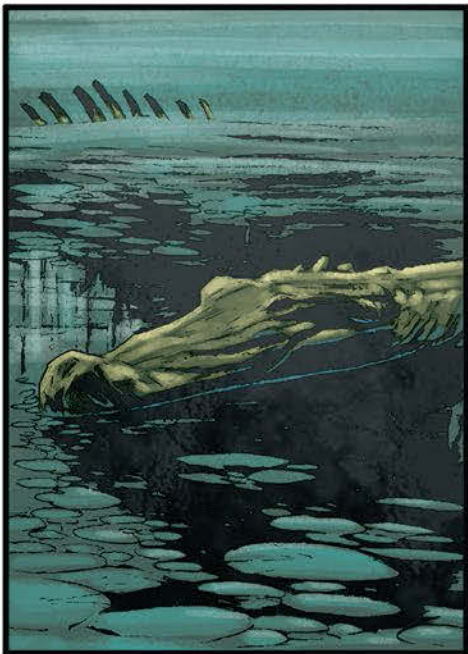
THOUGH I RECKON THE **WEATHER'S** GOIN' TO SHOW US WHAT **IT** CAN DO, FIRST. **SKY'S** GROWIN' **DARK**... AND I BELIEVE THAT'S THUNDER I HEAR IN THE DISTANCE.







DEVILS BY
THE DOZENS!
WHERE'S THE
SQUALL **DRIVEN**
US? SOME
OFFSHOOT?
AN **OXBOW O'**
SORTS?
WATER'S NEAR
STILL.



CURRENT MAY
BE **WEAK**, BUT
IT'S **CARRYING** US.
SEEMS WE'RE IN AN
INLET BETWEEN
TWO ISLES.

KEEP
HER **STEADY**,
BOXCRAY. IT'LL
CARRY US TO
THE MAIN RIVER
BEFORE IT'S
DONE.



FAIRWAY LIES
TO THE **NORTH**,
I RECKON.
MEANING WE
OUGHT TO TAKE
THE **RIGHT**
FORK.





WHERE DO YOU SEE A **FORK**?

BUT **ONE** ROUTE AHEAD. STAY THE COURSE.



I SEEN **TWO** BRANCHES MOMENTS AGO, I SWEAR IT.

MIGHT BE THE DAMNED **RAIN** WAS STILL IN ME EYES? OR 'TWERE THE **FOG**?



NO MATTER. WE'LL LET THE CURRENT CARRY US. THING IS...

WHAT **NOW**?

ME **COMPASS**. WAY IT'S POINTING DON'T MAKE SENSE...



NO, NO, IT'S FINE. **MISREAD** IT. MUST'VE BEEN SKEWED BY THE WATER ON THE **GLASS**. SAIL ON.

JUST... SAIL ON.

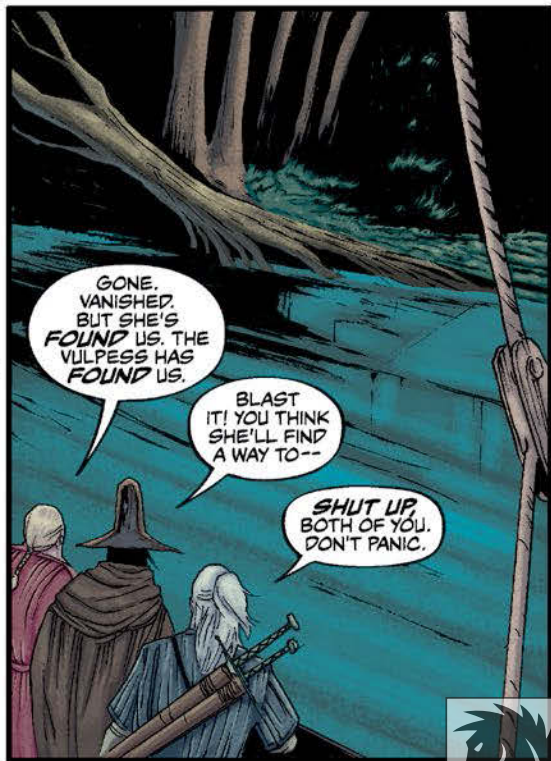
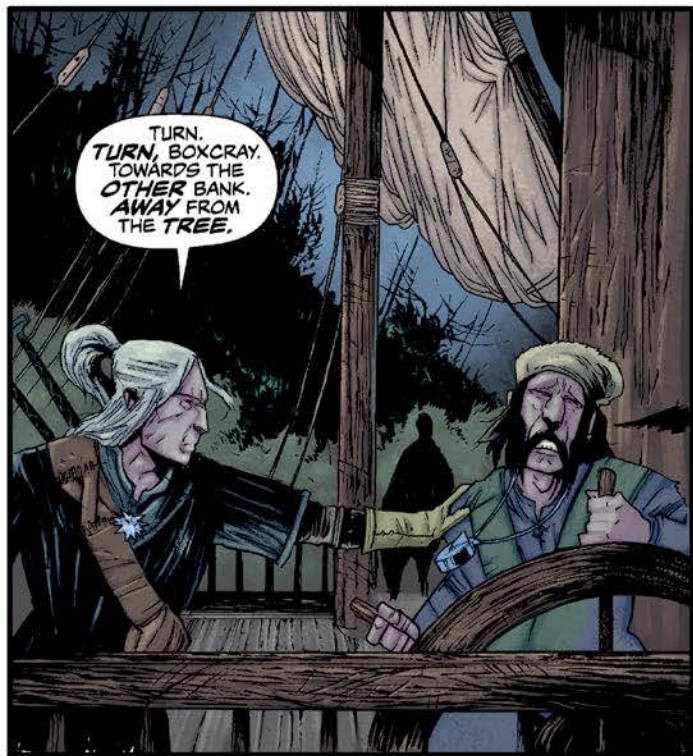


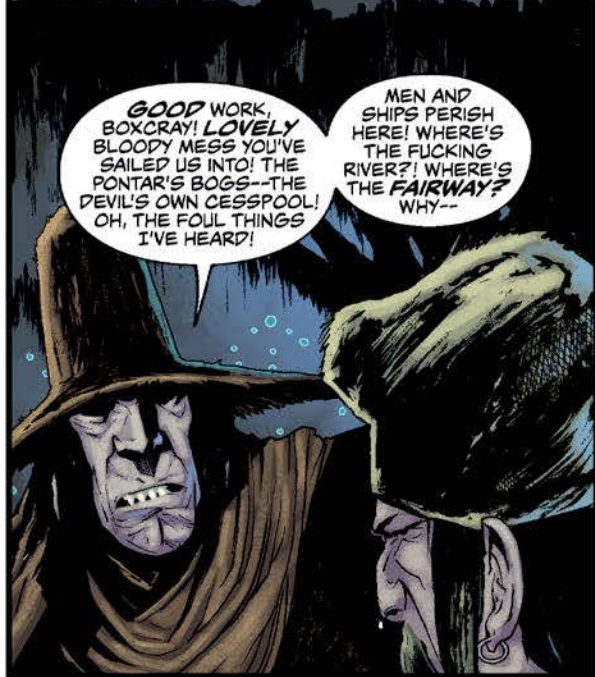
THE **FOG** IS LIFTING.

GOOD THING, TOO. OTHERWISE MIGHT'VE SAILED INTO A SANDBANK OR RIGHT UP A **KRAKEN'S** ARSE.

TRUE. AND BEEN **STUCK** EITHER WAY.





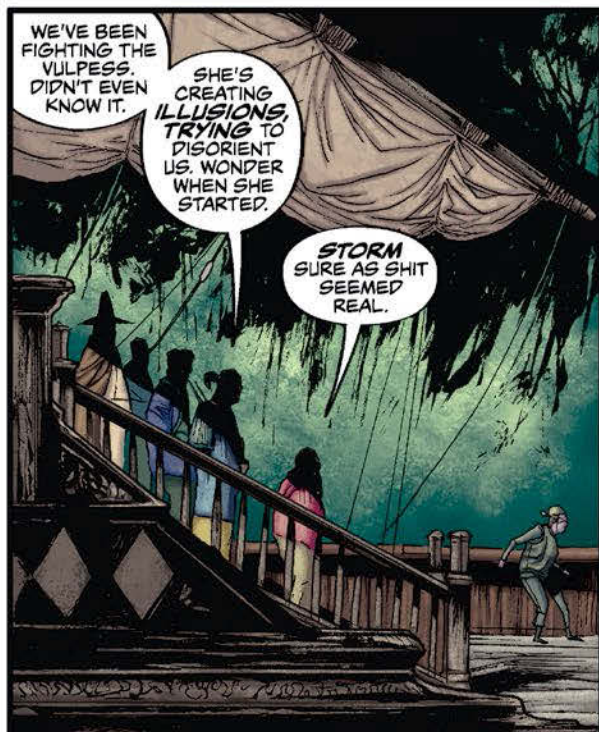






JUST A HANDFUL, SEE? **NEVER WERE ANY MORE**, BUT THEY WERE ENOUGH TO BUILD THE **ILLUSION**.

ILLUSION?



WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING THE VULPES. DIDN'T EVEN KNOW IT.

SHE'S CREATING **ILLUSIONS**, TRYING TO DISORIENT US. WONDER WHEN SHE STARTED.

STORM SURE AS SHIT SEEMED REAL.



THE ILLUSIONS USUALLY DO. THAT'S WHAT MAKES THEM DANGEROUS.

VULPES HAS US IN HER GRIP. DISAPPEARING FORKS, THE SPINNING COMPASS, THOSE SNAKES--ALL ILLUSIONS. **NOW** WE'RE LOST AND SCARED--AND THAT'S THE REAL DANGER.



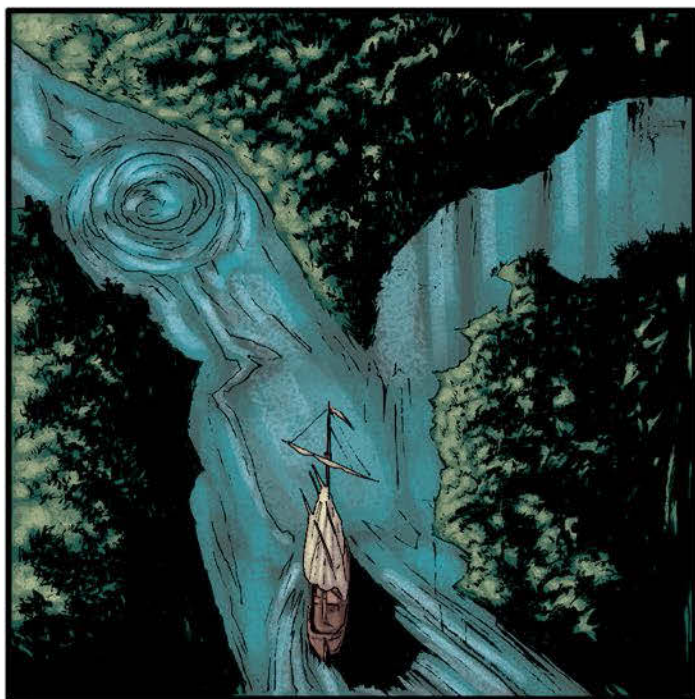
MIRAGES, EH? JUST **VISIONS**? MEAN THIS SNAKE AIN'T REAL?

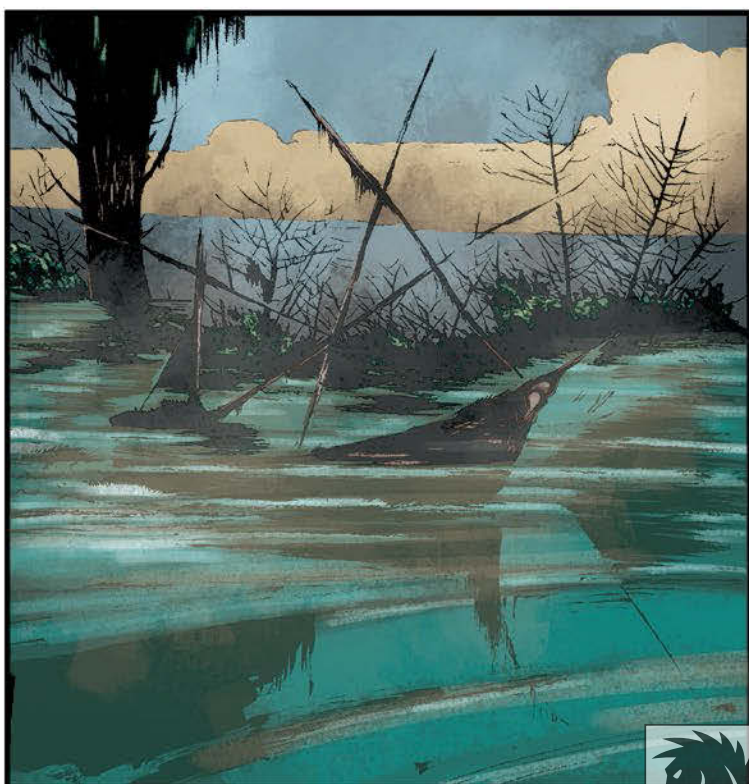
NO! **DON'T!**

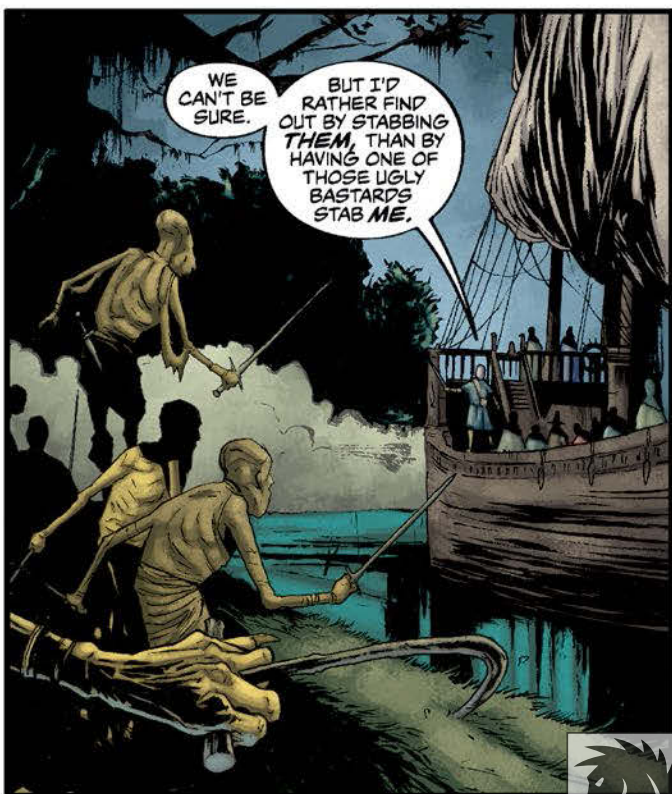


AHHH!



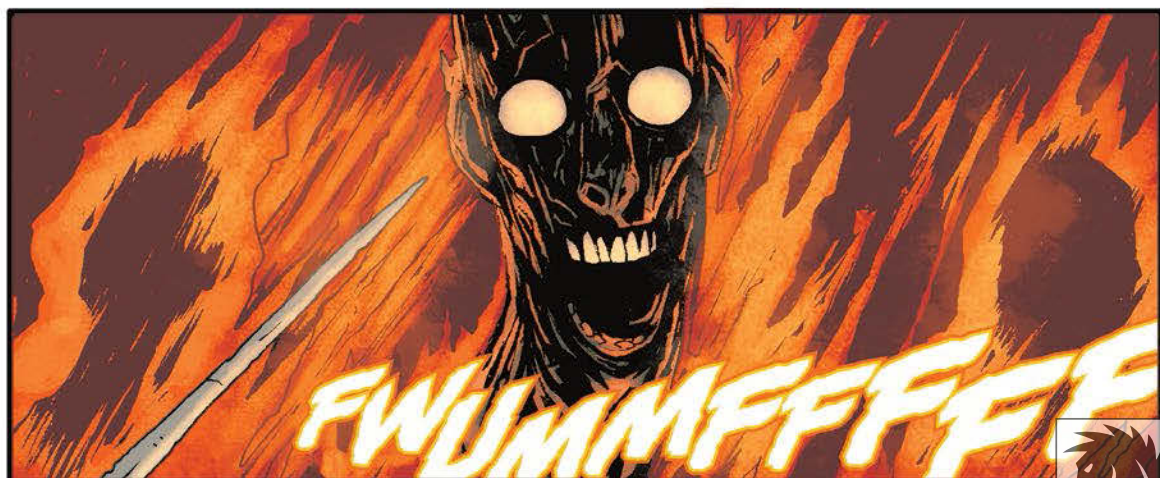














WELL, BUGGER
ME SIDWAYS, YE'VE
TURNED 'EM ALL
TO **ASH**.



DIDN'T TURN 'EM
INTO **ANYTHING**.
THEY WERE NEVER
HERE.

TELL
THAT TO MY
ARSEHOLE.
IT'S **SQUEEZED**
SHUT SO
TIGHT, YE--



ADDARIO,
YOU'RE IN THE
PRESENCE OF
A **LADY**.

AND A **FINE**
THING, TOO. AFTER
SEEN' THOSE **ROTTEN**
HAGS ON THE SHIP, MY
EYES NEED **BEAUTY** AS
MUCH AS MY **BELLY**
NEEDS **WINE**.



CAPTAIN
BOXCRAY'S
BOUND TO HAVE
A BOTTLE HE
COULD--



WITCHER!

COMPASS IS
STILL ACTIN' **BARMY**.
NEEDLE SAYS WE'VE
SHIFTED COURSE
AGAIN--**EAST** TO
SOUTH.

IF THIS AIN'T
THE **SHE-FOX'S**
TRICKERY, THEN IT'S
FOUL NEWS,
INDEED.

"SWAMP'S UNCHARTED, BUT NOT A SALT DON'T KNOW IT STRETCHES **FAR** SOUTH OF THE FAIRWAY. MEANS THE RIVER'S CARRYING US INTO THE **HEART** OF THE **BOG**."



THAT
TREE, THEN.
THAT TREE.



I CAN GET TO THE BANK--JUST WALK ACROSS THE WRECK. THEN I'LL CLIMB THE TREE.

SHOULD BE ABLE TO SPOT A CLEAR PASSAGE FROM THAT HEIGHT. FIND OUR WAY OUT OF THIS WET MAZE.

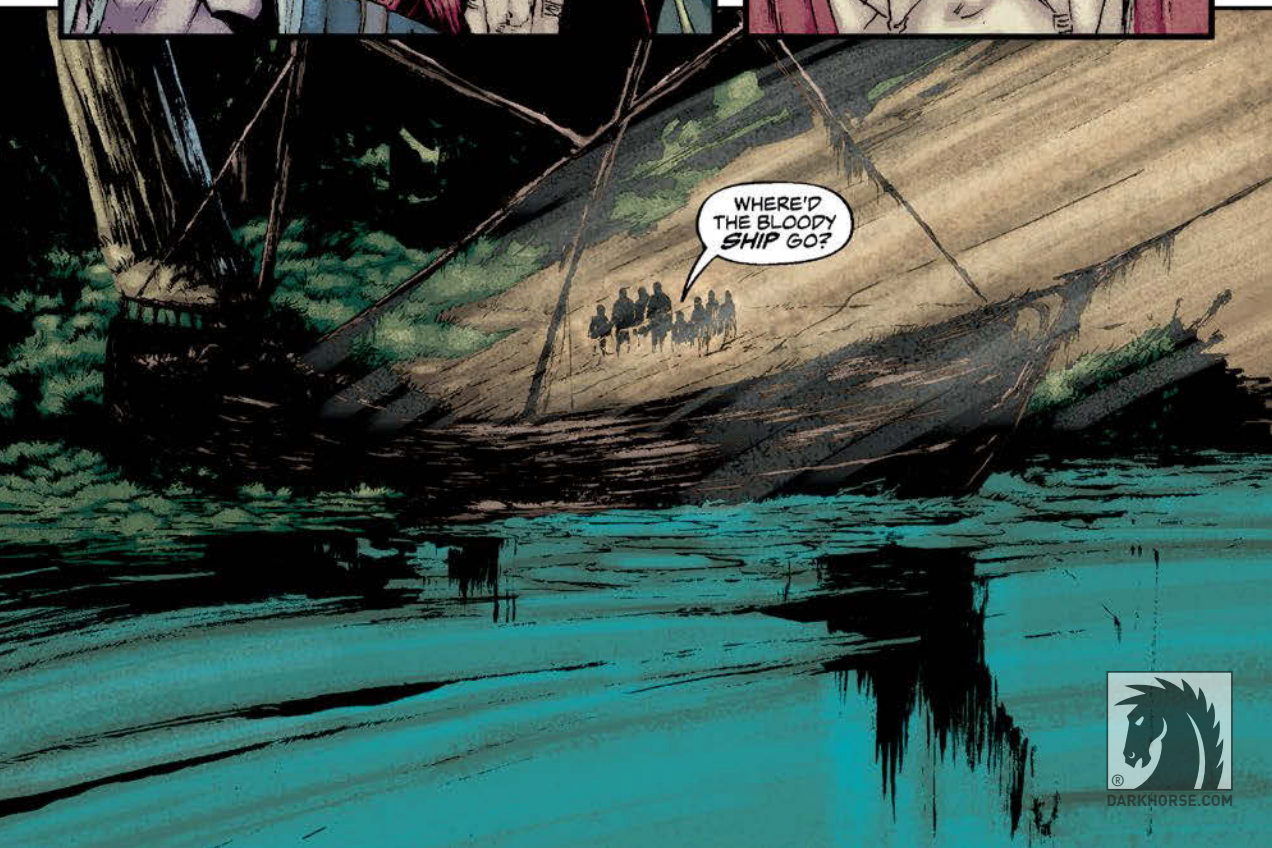


REST OF YOU STAY ONBOARD. I'LL CALL OUT AS SOON AS--

NO, GERALT. I'LL NOT STAY BEHIND WITH A BAND OF **MURDERERS**. I'M COMIN' WITH YE.

AS AM I.



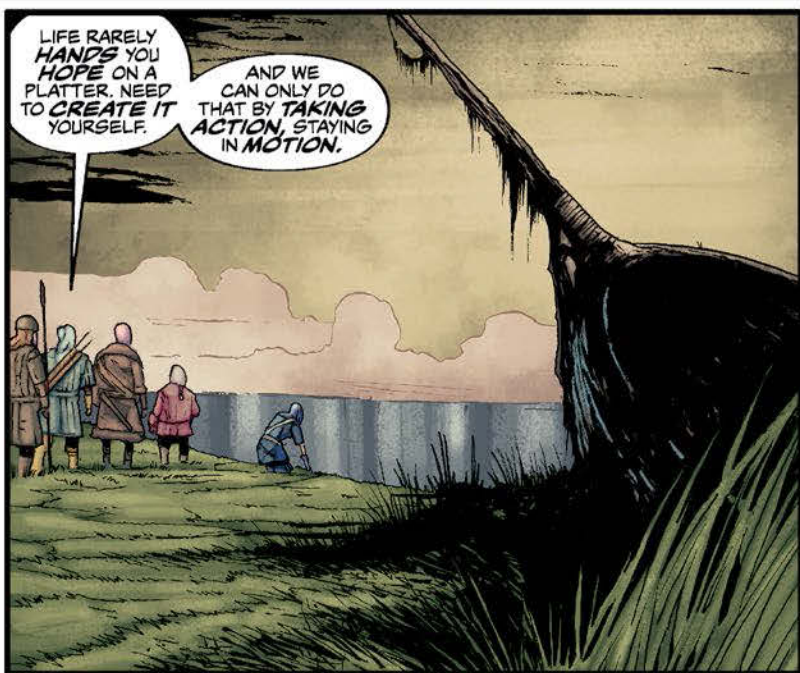


CHAPTER THREE





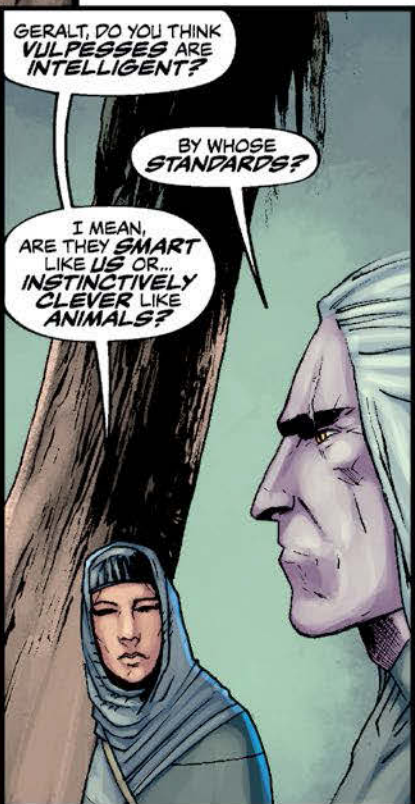








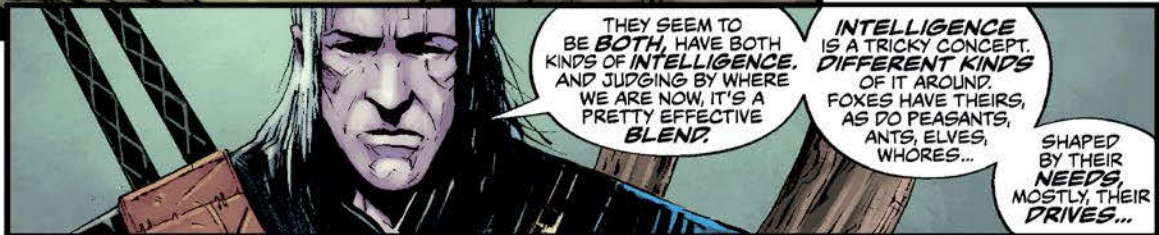




GERALT, DO YOU THINK VULPESSES ARE INTELLIGENT?

BY WHOSE STANDARDS?

I MEAN, ARE THEY SMART LIKE US OR... INSTINCTIVELY CLEVER LIKE ANIMALS?



THEY SEEM TO BE BOTH, HAVE BOTH KINDS OF INTELLIGENCE. AND JUDGING BY WHERE WE ARE NOW, IT'S A PRETTY EFFECTIVE BLEND.

INTELLIGENCE IS A TRICKY CONCEPT. DIFFERENT KINDS OF IT AROUND. FOXES HAVE THEIRS, AS DO PEASANTS, ANTS, ELVES, WHORES...

SHAPED BY THEIR NEEDS, MOSTLY, THEIR DRIVES...



WHAT DOES THE VULPESS NEED?



DUNNO. YOU'LL HAVE TO ASK HER NEXT TIME SHE SHOWS.

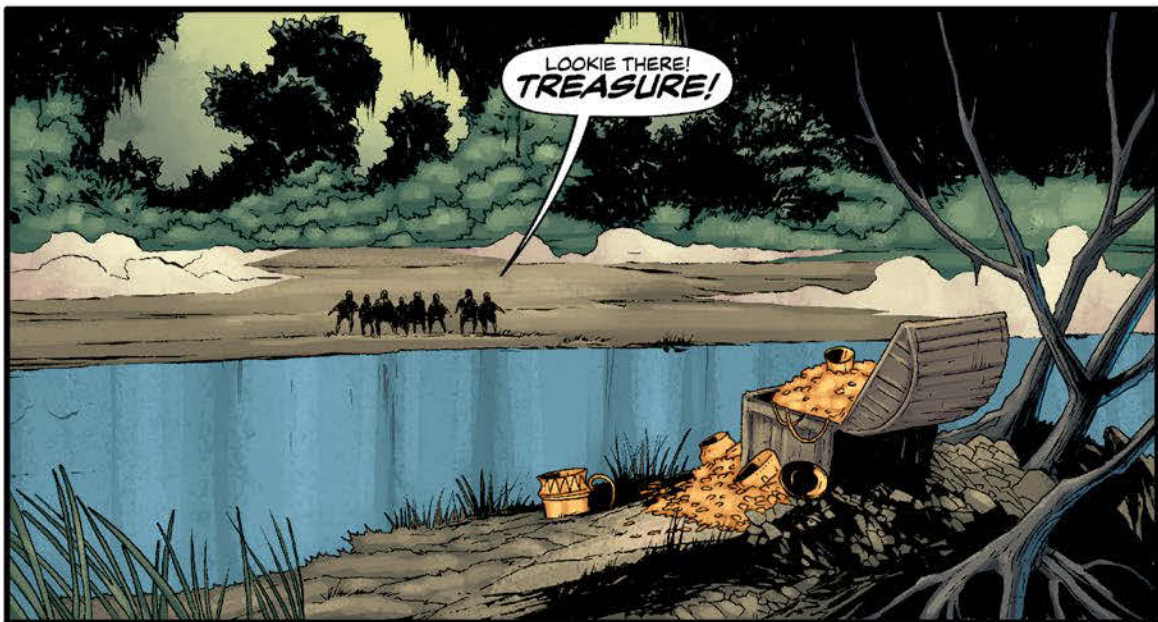
IS HE ALWAYS SO DIFFICULT TO TALK TO?



NO. THERE'S TIMES HE'S WORSE.

BUT HE'S GOT A CERTAIN CHARM AND HE'S NOT THE SORT TO STEAL YOUR BREAD, SO HE MAKES A FINE TRAVELIN' COMPANION, SO LONG AS--

TREASURE!



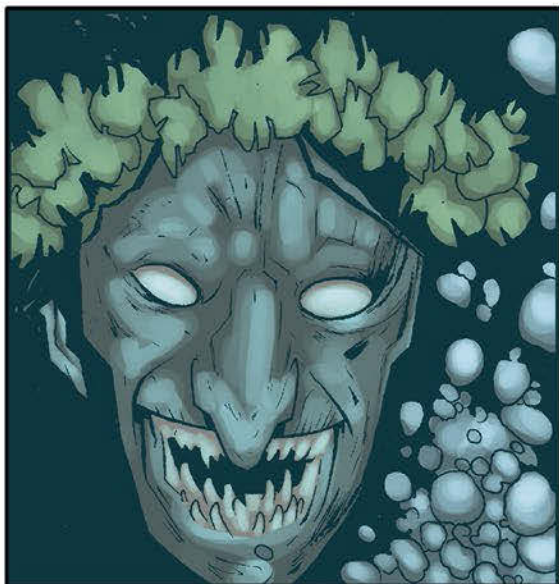
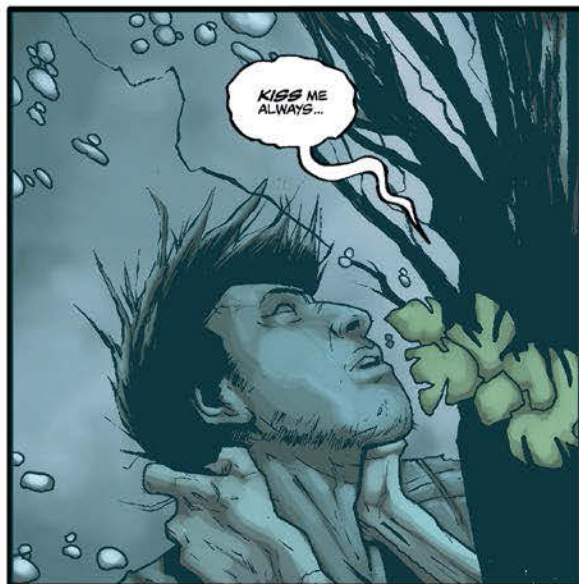
"GET OUT
OF THE
WATER!"



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CAN'T BE SURE OF
A DAMN THING.
NOT EVEN IF WE'RE AT
THE WATER'S EDGE,
OR IN IT.

BUGGER
ME!



ONLY *SURE* THING
IS THE *DEAD*. BUT
EVEN IF THEY WEREN'T
NOTORIOUSLY *TIGHT
LIPPED*, I *DOUBT* THEY
COULD TELL US HOW
THEY *WOUND UP*
THAT WAY...

SO WE
MOVE ON.
WITHOUT MY
SWORDS,
WITHOUT
THE DEAD.

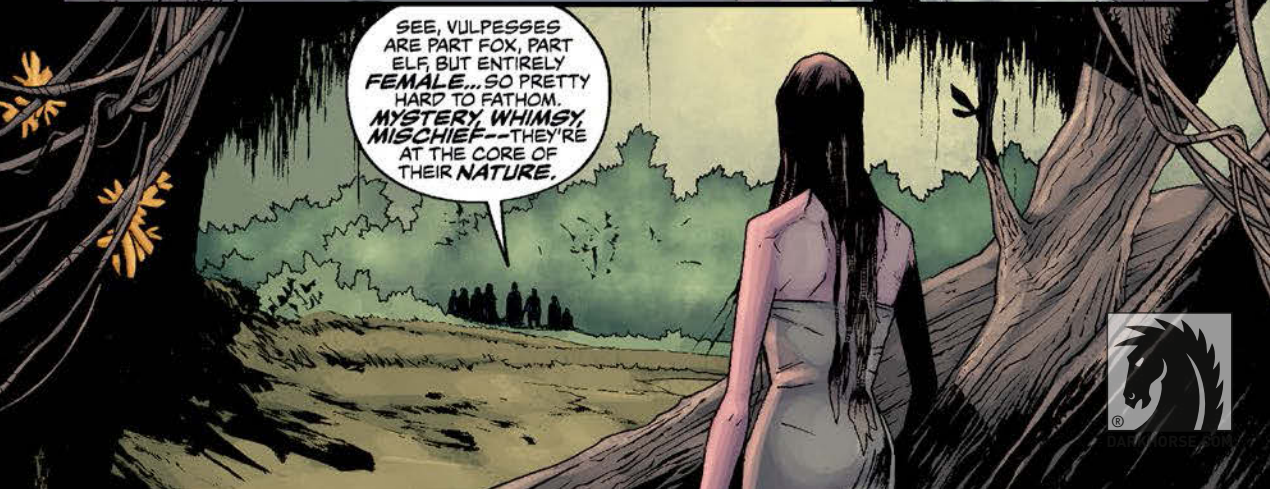


GERALT, I WAS WONDERING...THESE
ILLUSIONS, DO THEY COME SOLELY
FROM THE *VULPESS'S MIND*?
OR DOES SHE *DRAW* FROM
OTHERS...OUR OWN IMAGININGS,
FOR INSTANCE?

NO IDEA.
NO ONE *KNOWS*
MUCH ABOUT THE
CREATURES.



AND WHAT
WE DO KNOW
*MIGHT BE AN
ILLUSION*
ANYWAY.

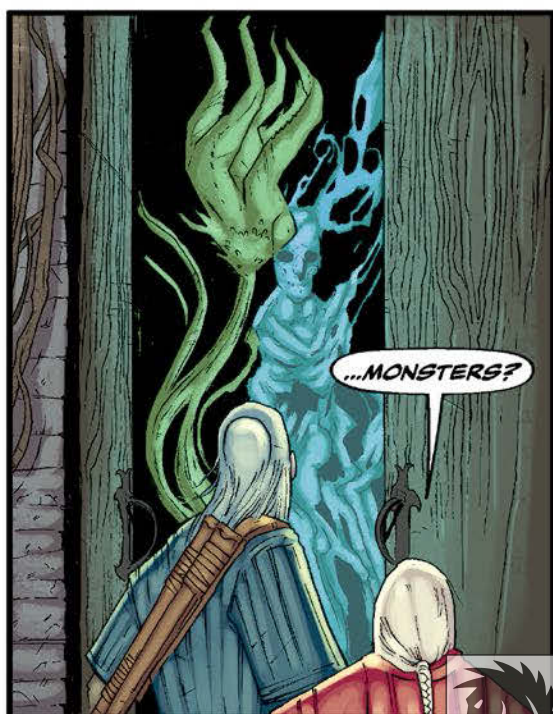
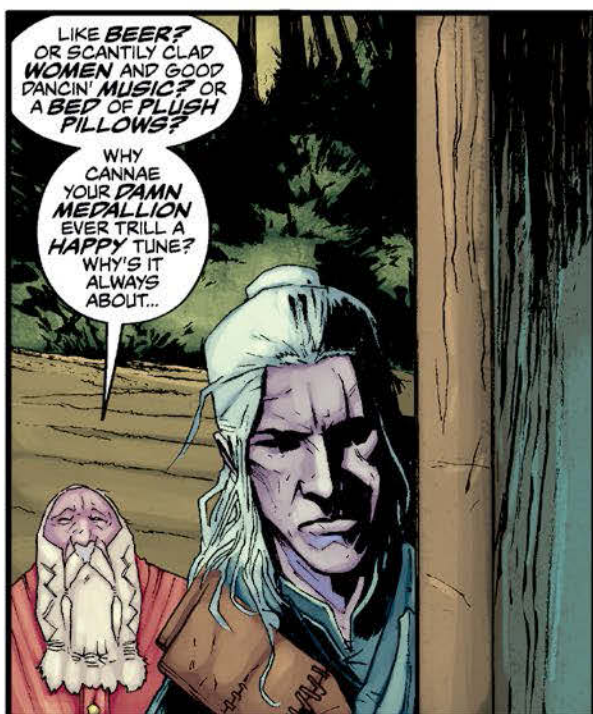


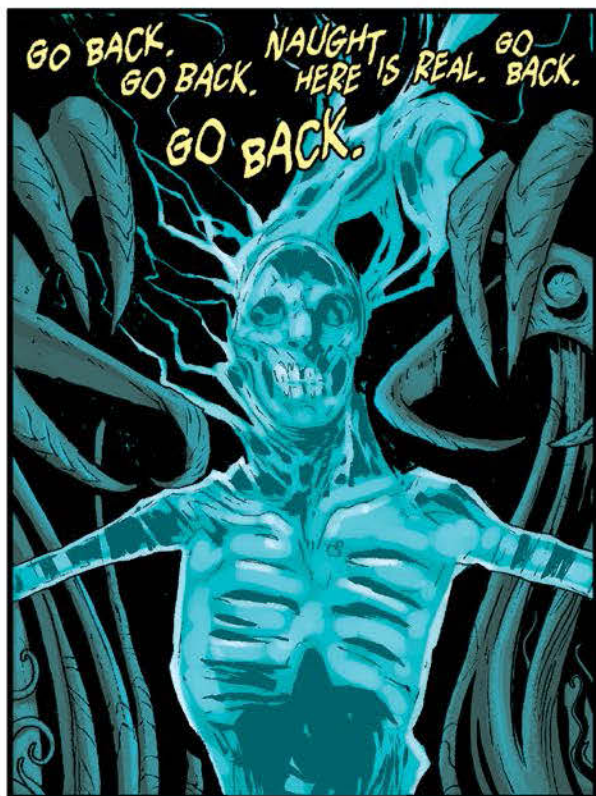
SEE, VULPESSSES
ARE PART FOX, PART
ELF, BUT ENTIRELY
FEMALE...SO PRETTY
HARD TO FATHOM.
MYSTERY WHIMSY.
MISCHIEF...THEY'RE
AT THE CORE OF
THEIR NATURE.



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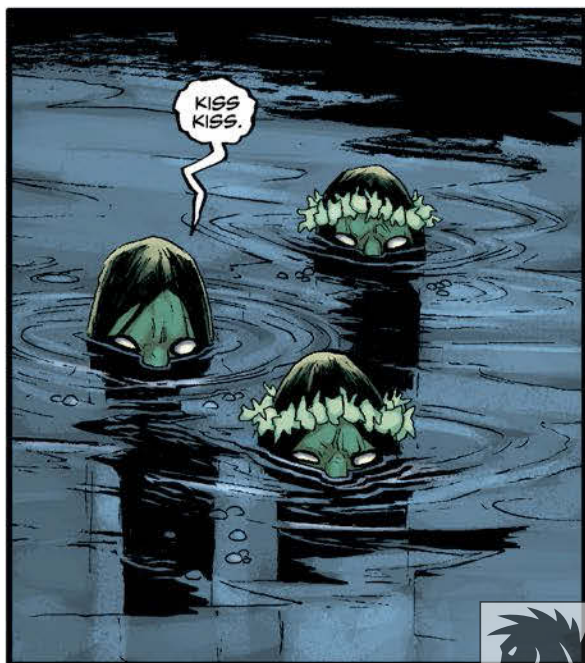
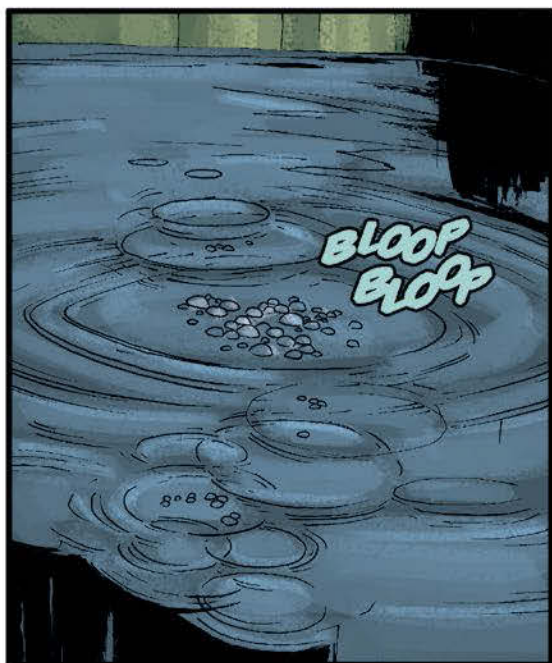














GERALT?

I SEE THEM. MORE HAGGS. STAY AWAY FROM THE WATER.



AND KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ANYTHING ELSE.

HAGGS MIGHT BE AN ILLUSION TO DRAW OUR ATTENTION AWAY FROM--



TREASURE! TREASURE!

LOOK AT ALL THAT GOLD!

EHH? WHAT'RE THOSE DUNDERHEADS SEEN'?



THERE'S NO TREASURE, YOU STUPID--



KISS KISS. KISS ME.

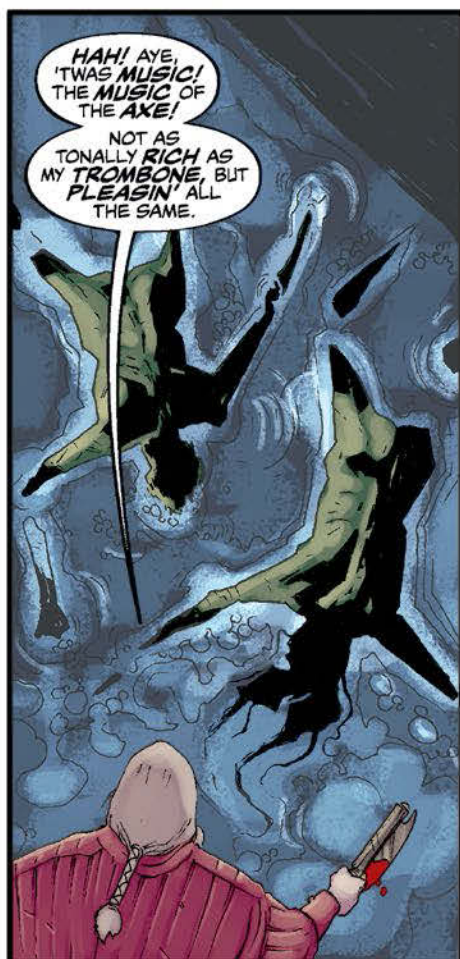
DAMN YOU!

AHHH!

SPLASH







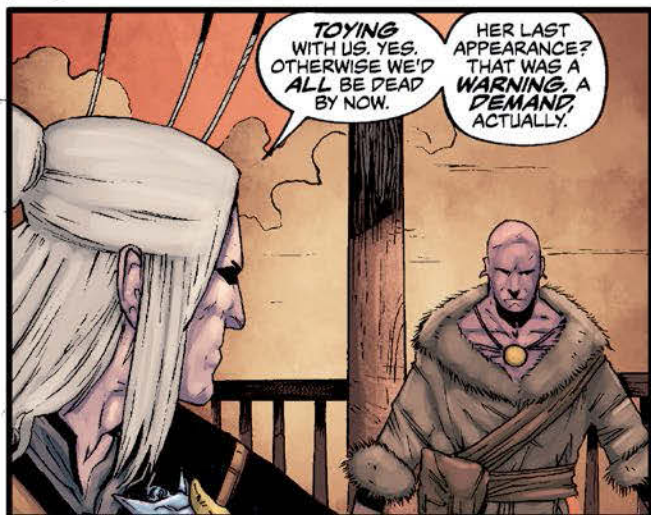




CHAPTER FOUR









AN IDEA WORTHY OF A MADMAN OR A COMPLETE Eejit. THINKIN' YE MIGHT BE THE LATTER.

WE SHOW THE FOX WENCH WE'VE KILLED THE LASS, WE FLAUNT IT, WE'RE DONE FOR.



WE DIDN'T KILL THAT CUB.

PARLAGHY DID. HE'S GUILTY. WE'RE CLEAN.



INDEED! CAPTAIN BOXCRAY! PARLAGHY'S THE GUILTY ONE!



LET THE FOX ELFESS HAVE HER VENGEANCE ON HIM. WE'LL PUT HIM IN THE DINGHY WITH THE CORPSE, SET THEM ADrift. IT'LL GIVE US TIME TO--



NAY. NOT ON MY WATCH.



NOR ON MY SHIP! MASTER PARLAGHY MIGHT INDEED BEAR THE GUILT, BUT TO THROW HIM OVERBOARD SENTENCE HIM TO DEATH? NO, NOT THAT.



IT'S HIS DEATH OR OURS! WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE US DO?

WITCHER! CAN WE COUNT ON YOU SHOULD THE VULPES COME ABOARD?

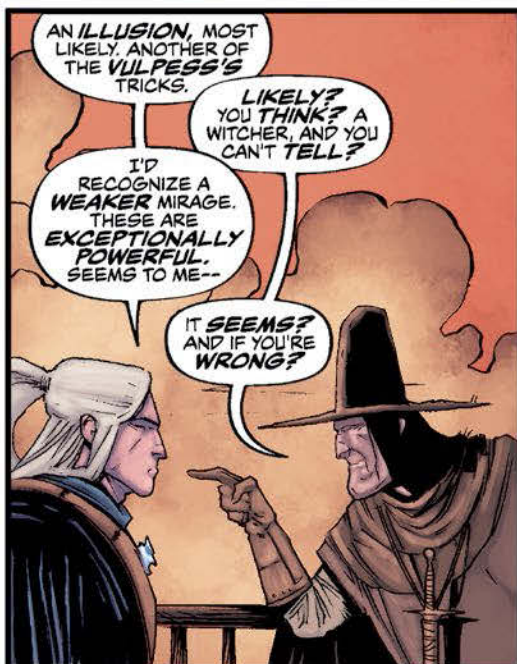


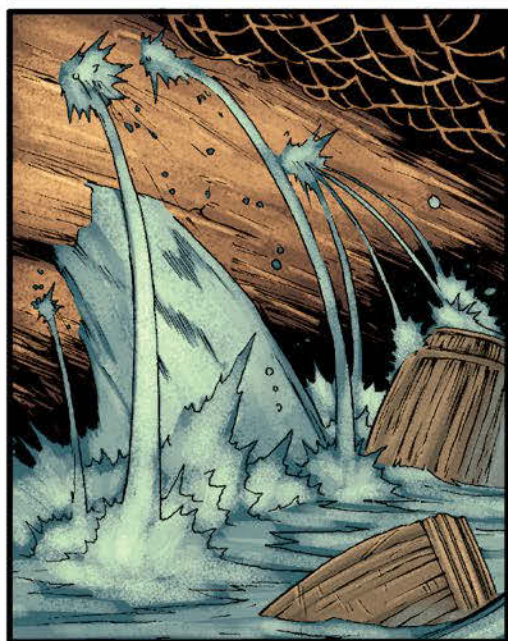
"YES, FYSH. I'LL DEFEND EVEN YOU."



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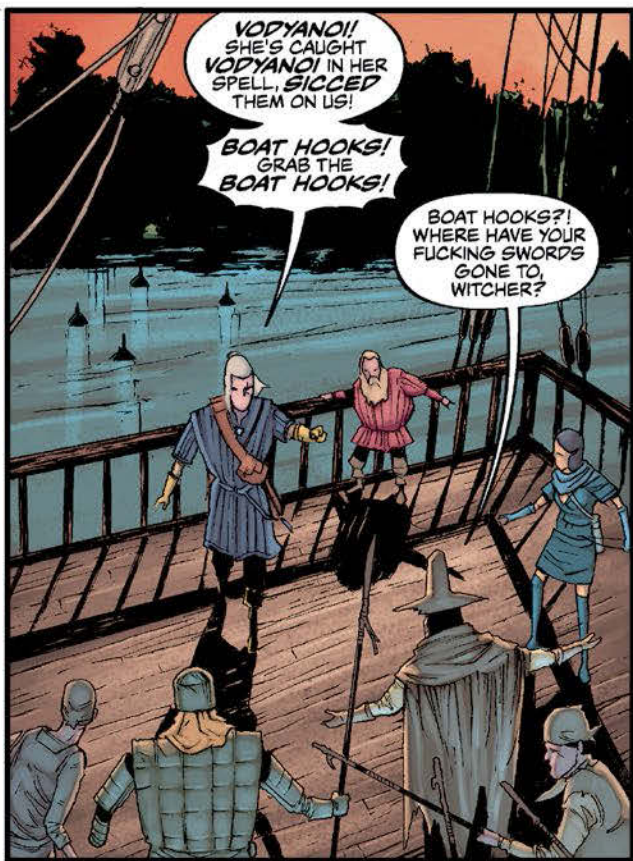








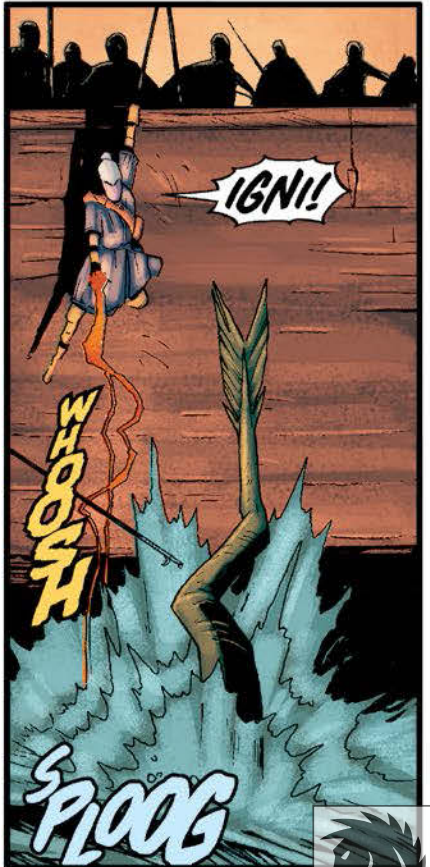
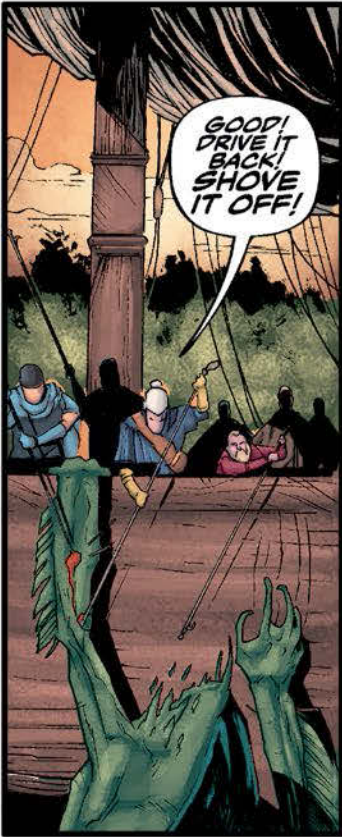


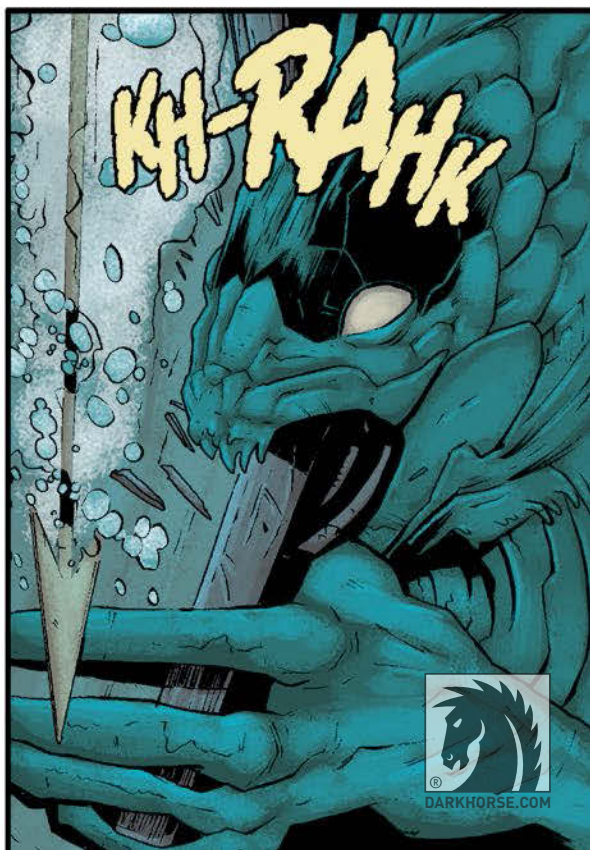


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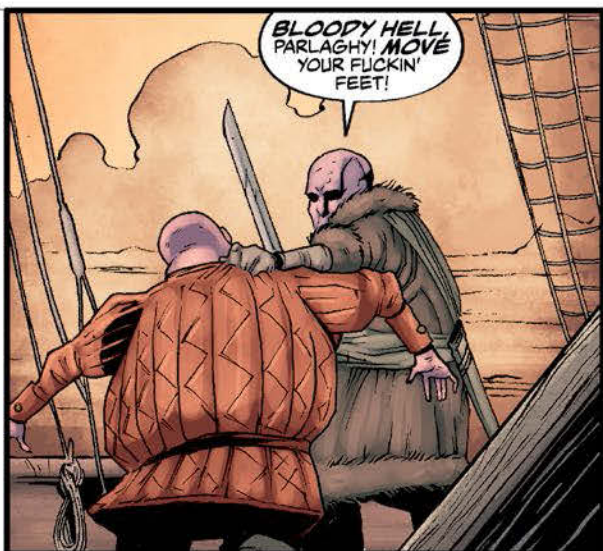
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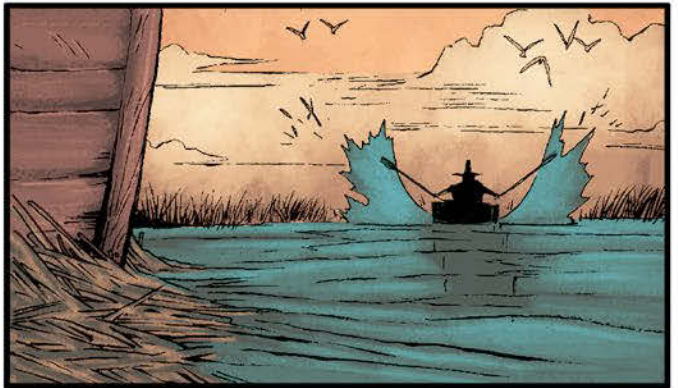




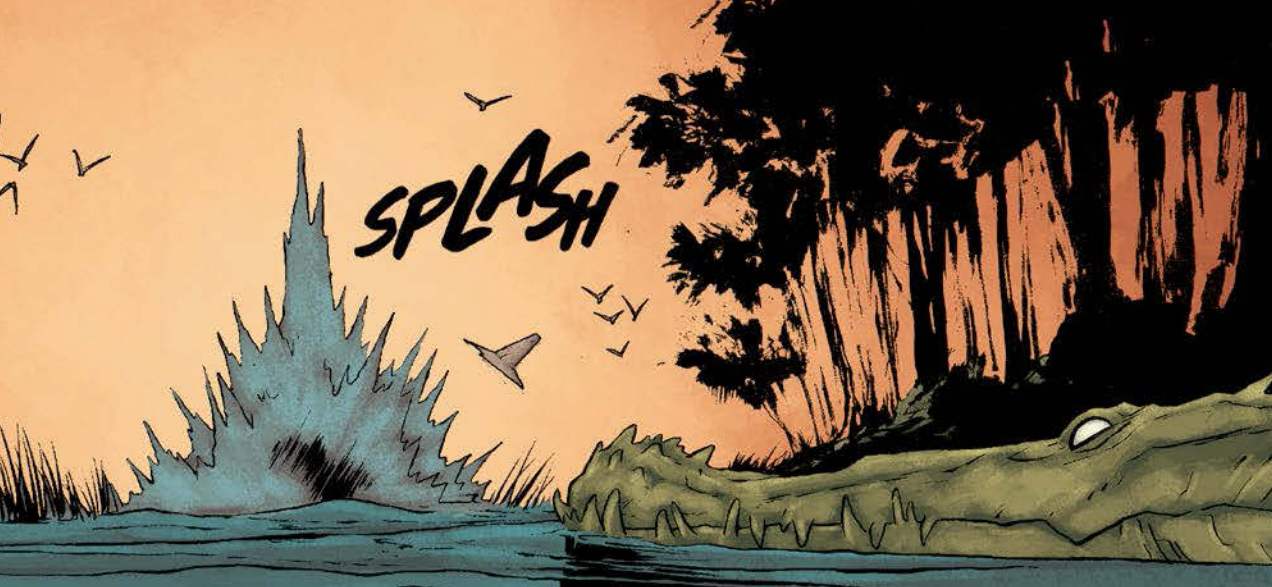








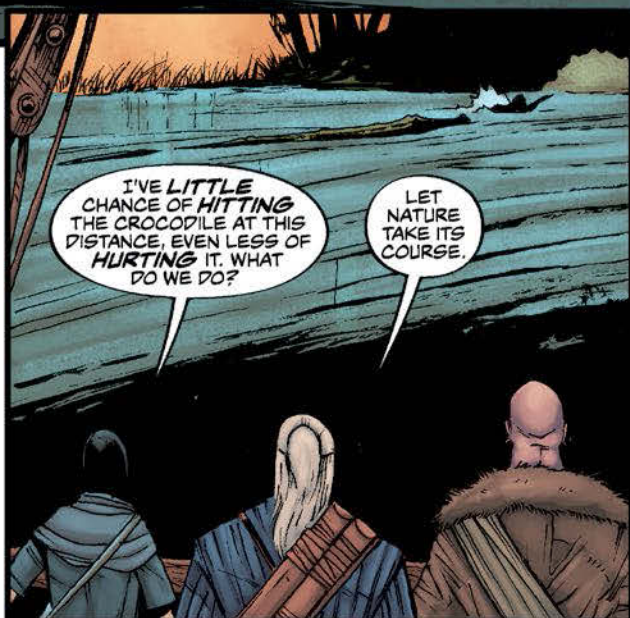




SPLASH

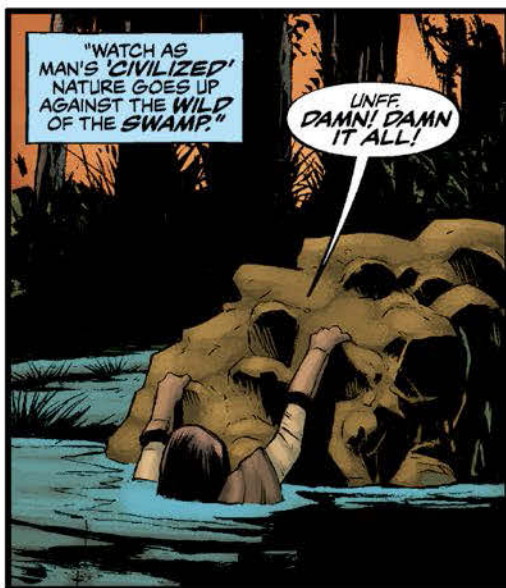


OH
GODS!



I'VE LITTLE
CHANCE OF HITTING
THE CROCODILE AT THIS
DISTANCE, EVEN LESS OF
HURTING IT. WHAT
DO WE DO?

LET
NATURE
TAKE ITS
COURSE.



"WATCH AS
MAN'S 'CIVILIZED'
NATURE GOES UP
AGAINST THE WILD
OF THE SWAMP."

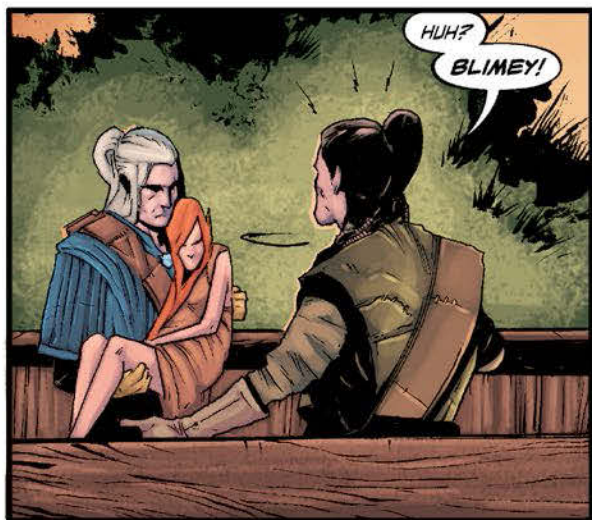
UNFF.
DAMN! DAMN
IT ALL!

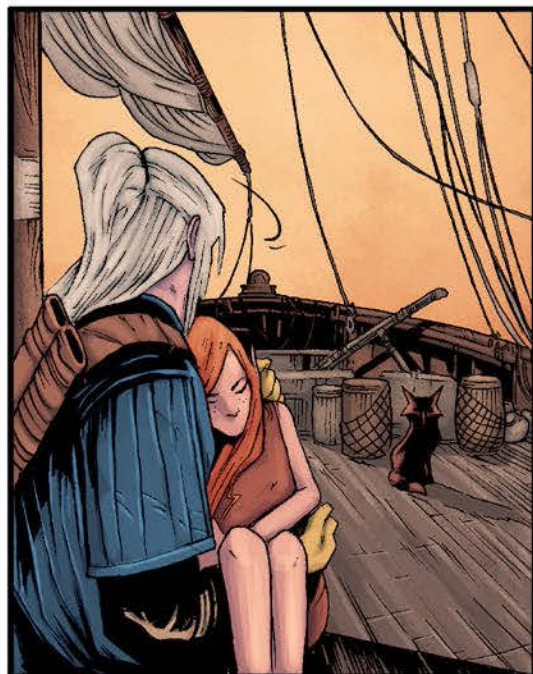


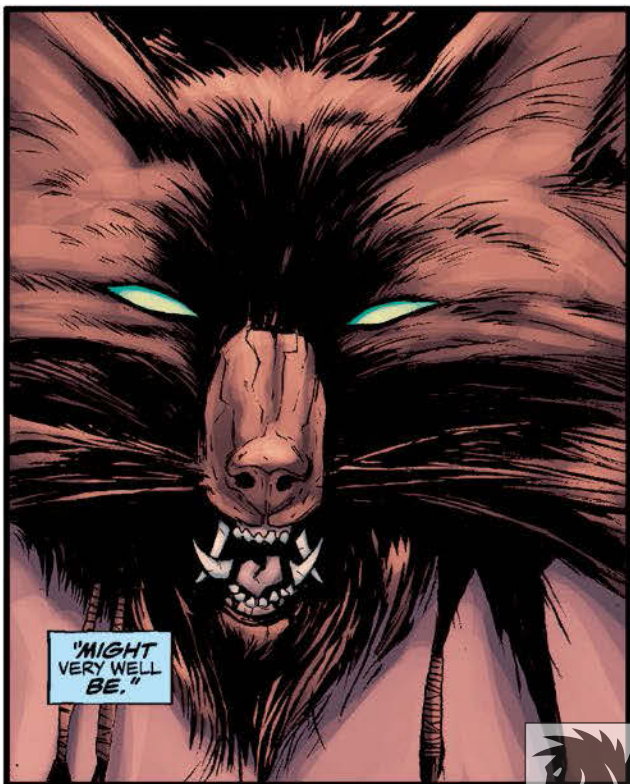
"AND GET
A LESSON..."









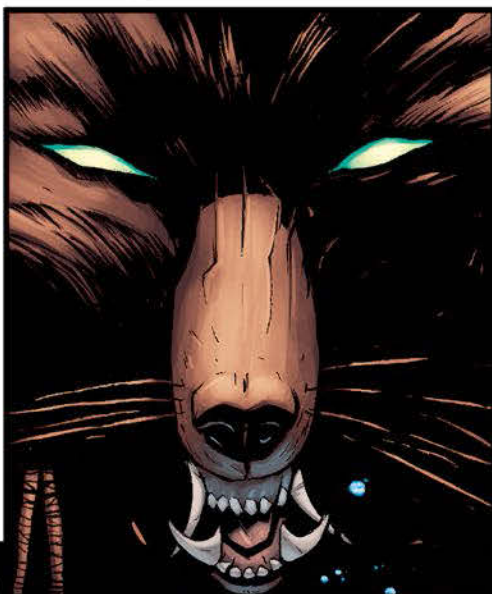


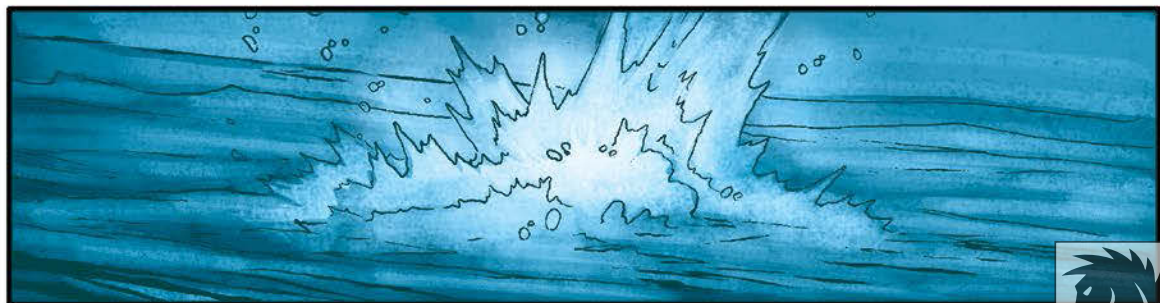
CHAPTER FIVE

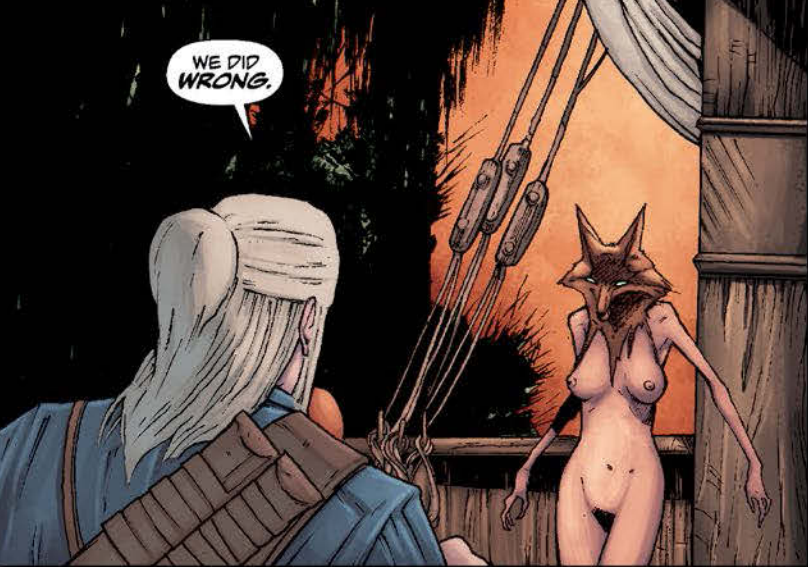












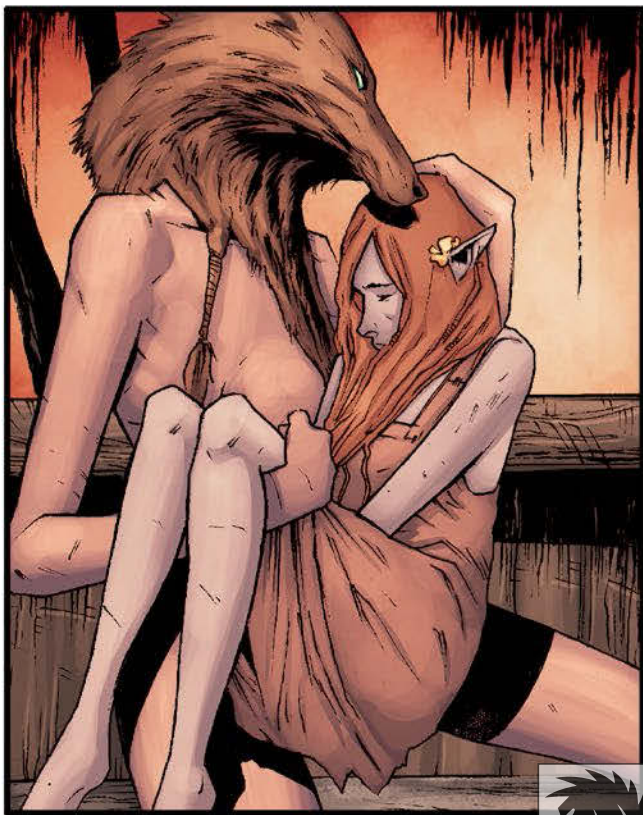
WE DID
WRONG.

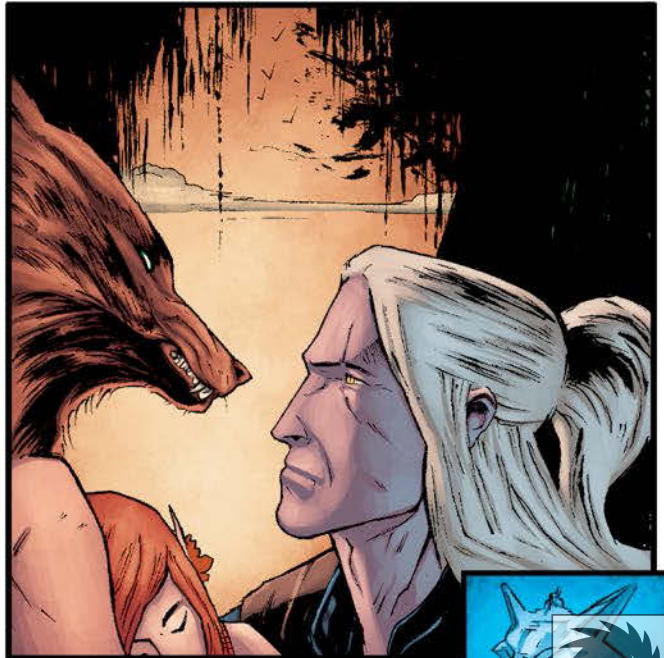
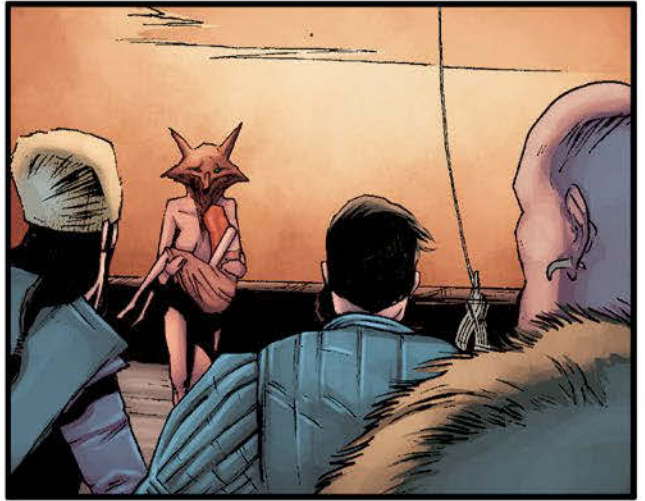


I DID
WRONG. OFFERED
PROTECTION TO
MEN WHO *DIDN'T*
DESERVE IT.



THEY BEHAVED
BADLY. BUT LET THAT
BE AS BAD AS THINGS GET.
I *CAN'T*--I *WON'T* LET
YOU *BUTCHER* THEM.





RRRRRRRRRR



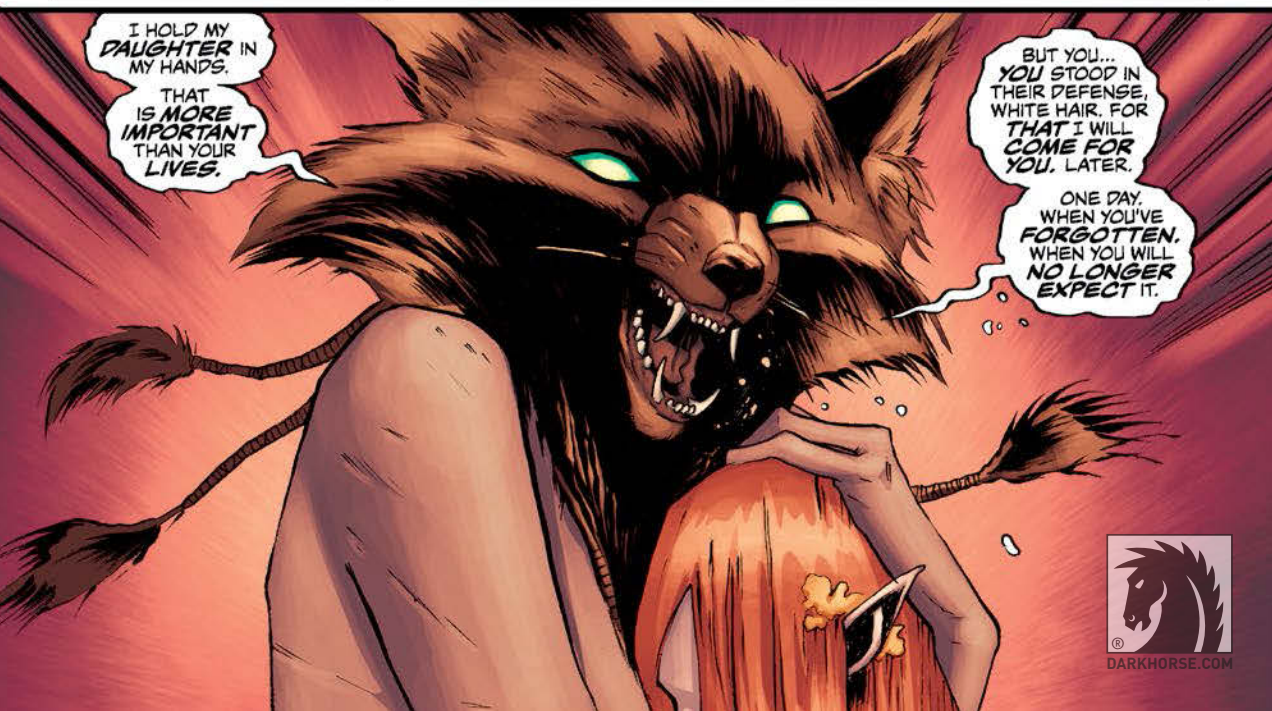


YOU
STOOD
AGAINST
ME.

YES.



IN *THEIR*
DEFENSE.

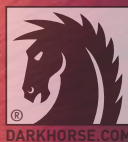


I HOLD MY
DAUGHTER IN
MY HANDS.

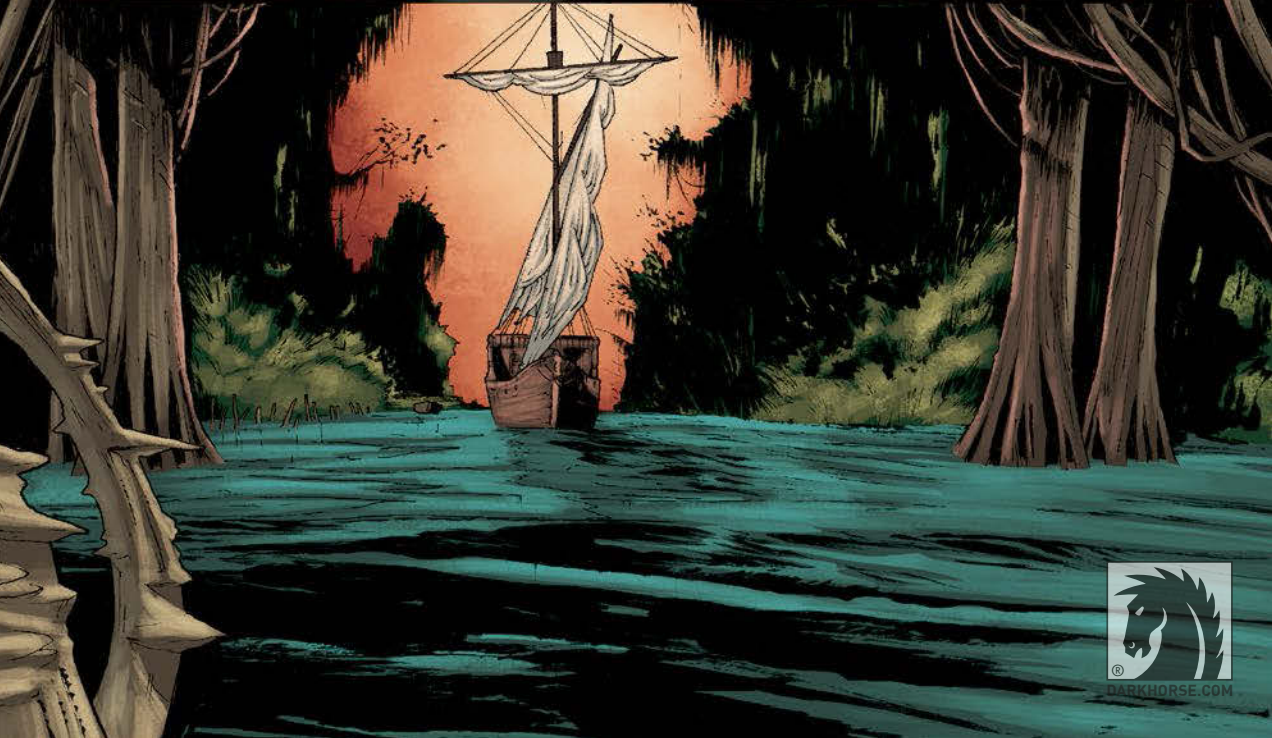
THAT
IS MORE
IMPORTANT
THAN YOUR
LIVES.

BUT YOU...
YOU STOOD IN
THEIR DEFENSE,
WHITE HAIR. FOR
THAT I WILL
COME FOR
YOU. LATER.

ONE DAY,
WHEN YOU'VE
FORGOTTEN.
WHEN YOU WILL
NO LONGER
EXPECT IT.

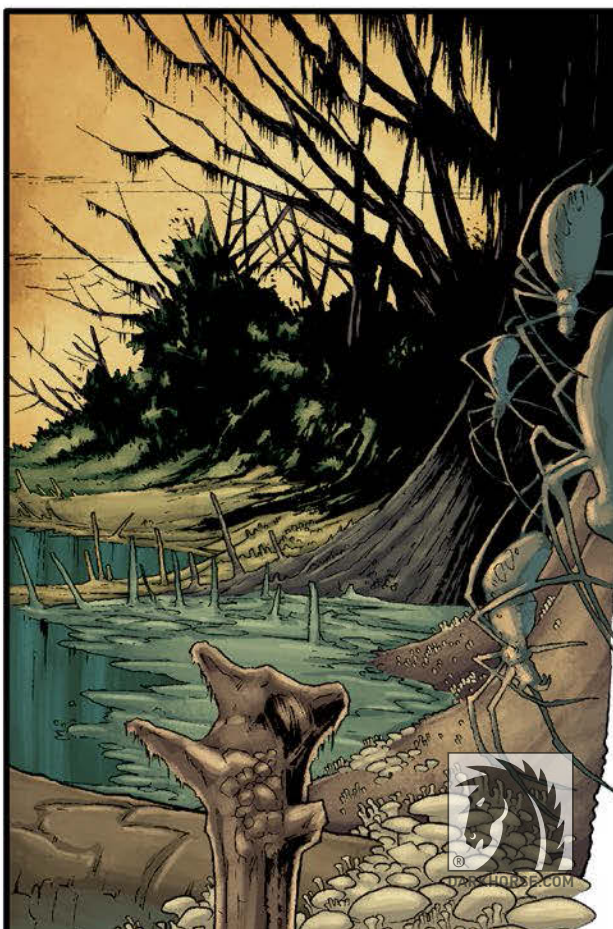


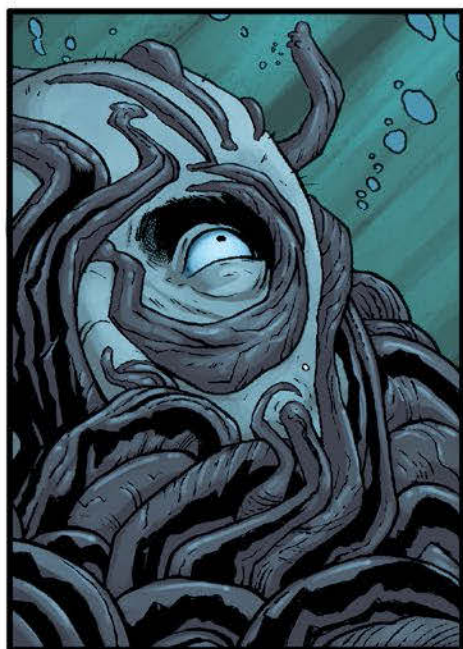
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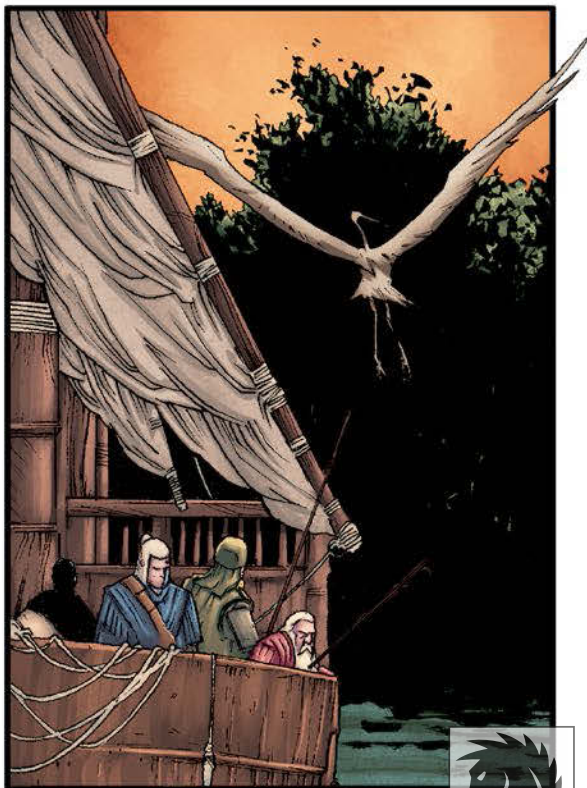
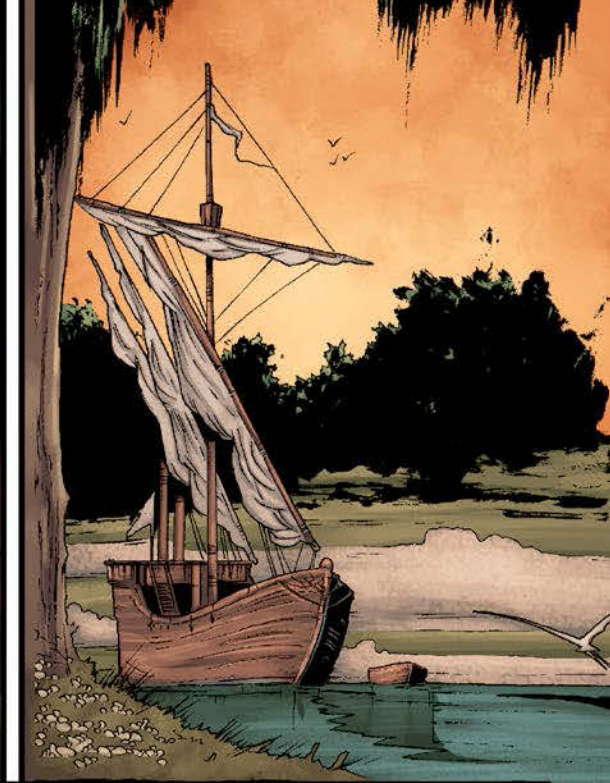






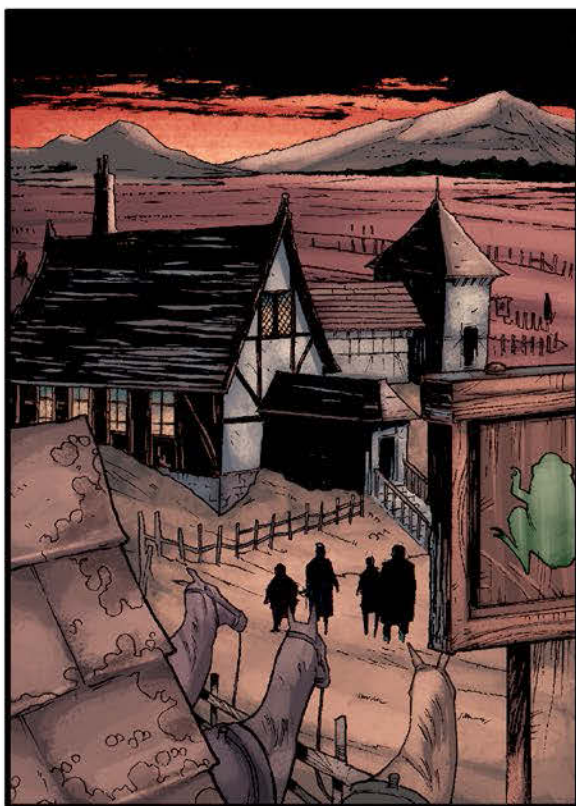










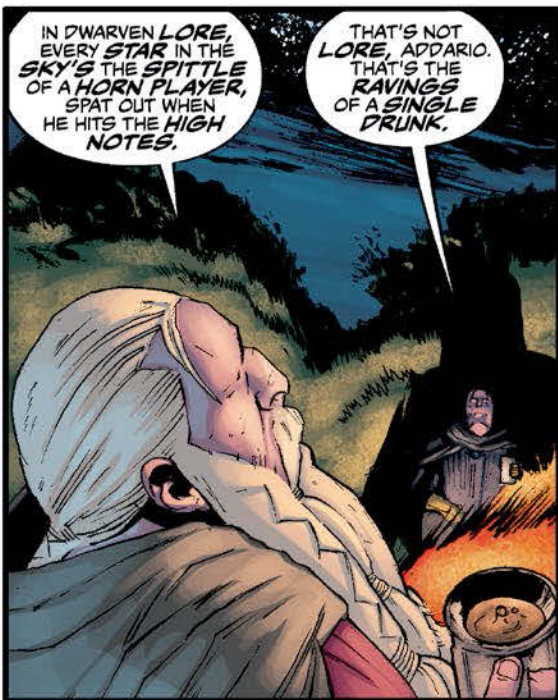






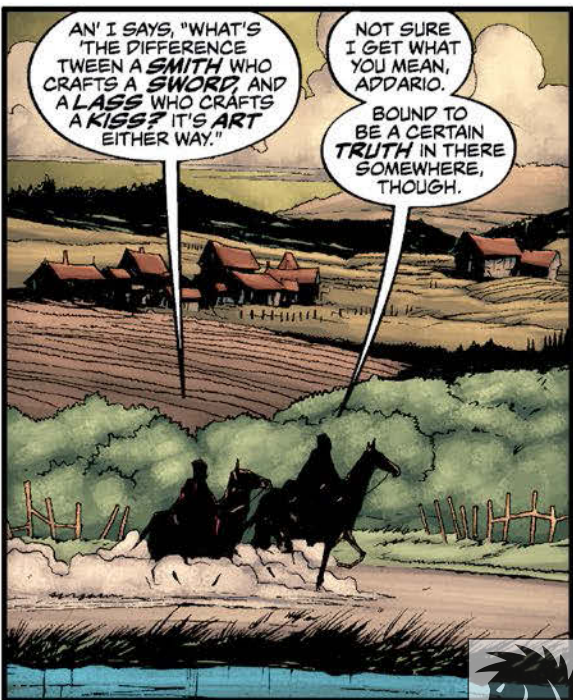
HEARD A BARRELFUL
O' YER **TALES**, GERALT.
YE'VE **BESTED** EVERY
BEAST YE'VE FACED, BUT
SEEMS TO ME HALF THE
WENCHES IN THE WORLD
HAVE **KICKED** YER
WITCHER'S ARSE.

**RING OF
TRUTH** TO THAT,
UNDENIABLY.



IN DWARVEN **LORE**,
EVERY **STAR** IN THE
SKY'S THE **SPITTLE**
OF A **HORN** PLAYER,
SPAT OUT WHEN
HE HITS THE **HIGH**
NOTES.

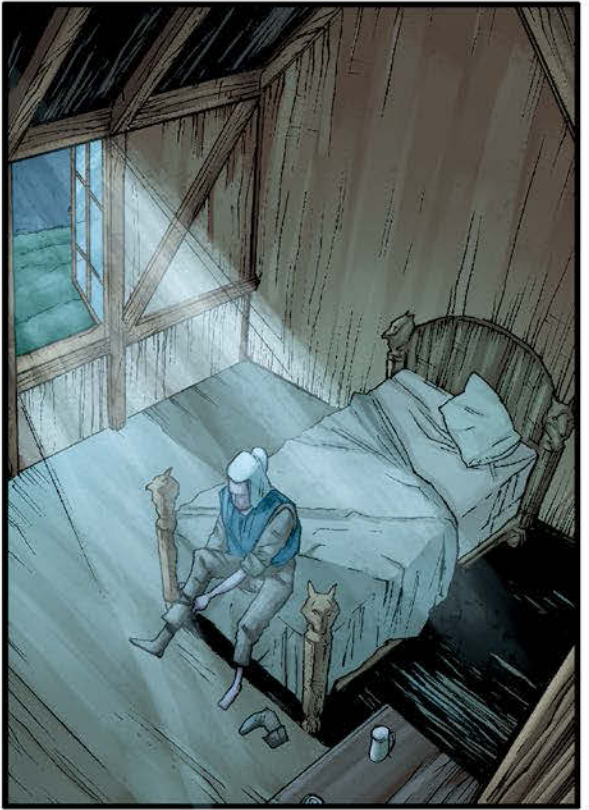
THAT'S NOT
LORE, ADDARIO.
THAT'S THE
RAVINGS
OF A **SINGLE**
DRUNK.

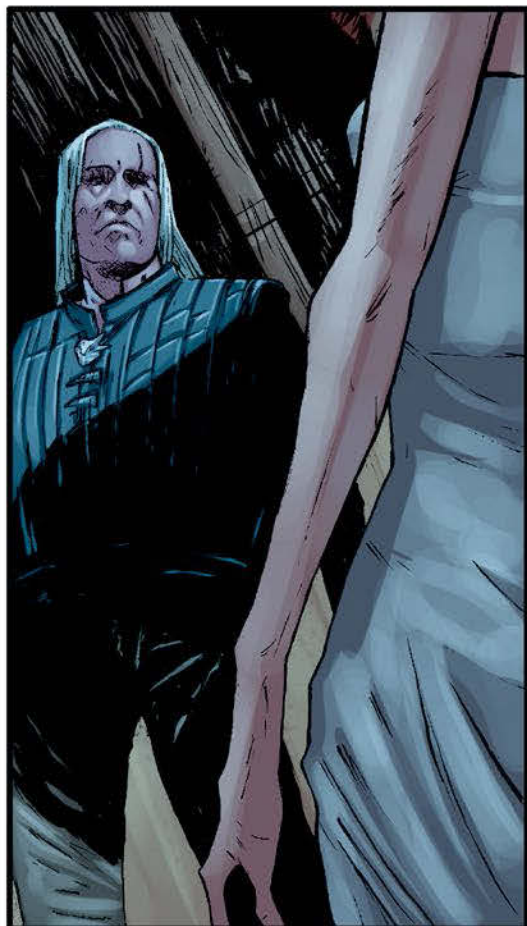


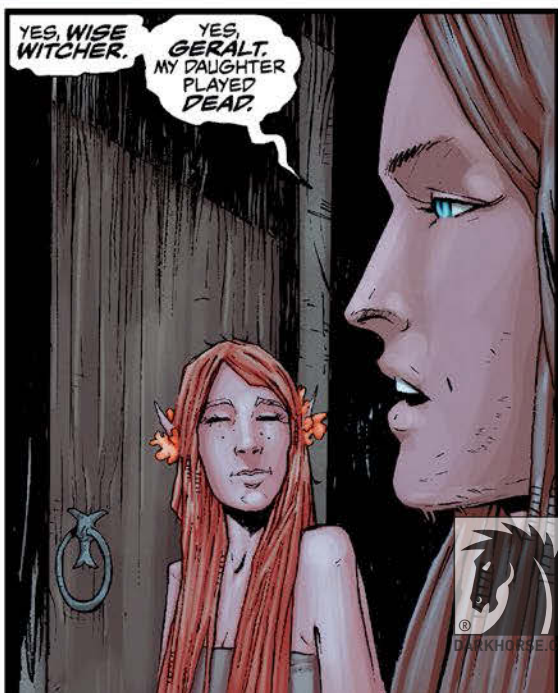
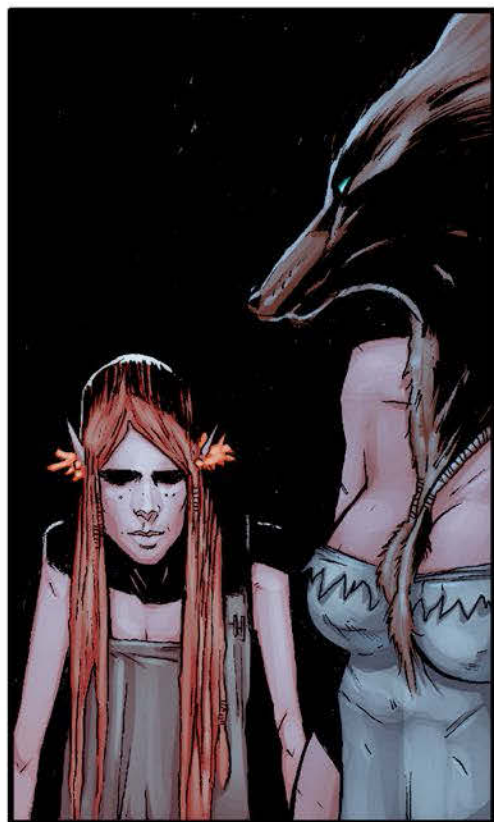
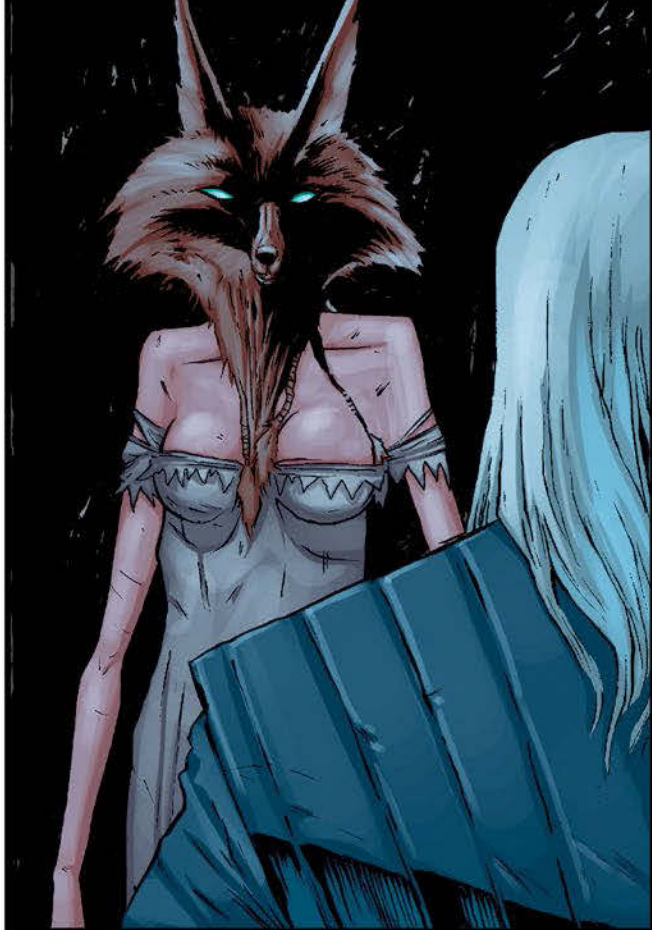
AN' I SAYS, "WHAT'S
THE DIFFERENCE
TWEEN A **SMITH** WHO
CRAFTS A **SWORD**, AND
A **LASS** WHO CRAFTS
A **KISS**? IT'S **ART**
EITHER WAY."

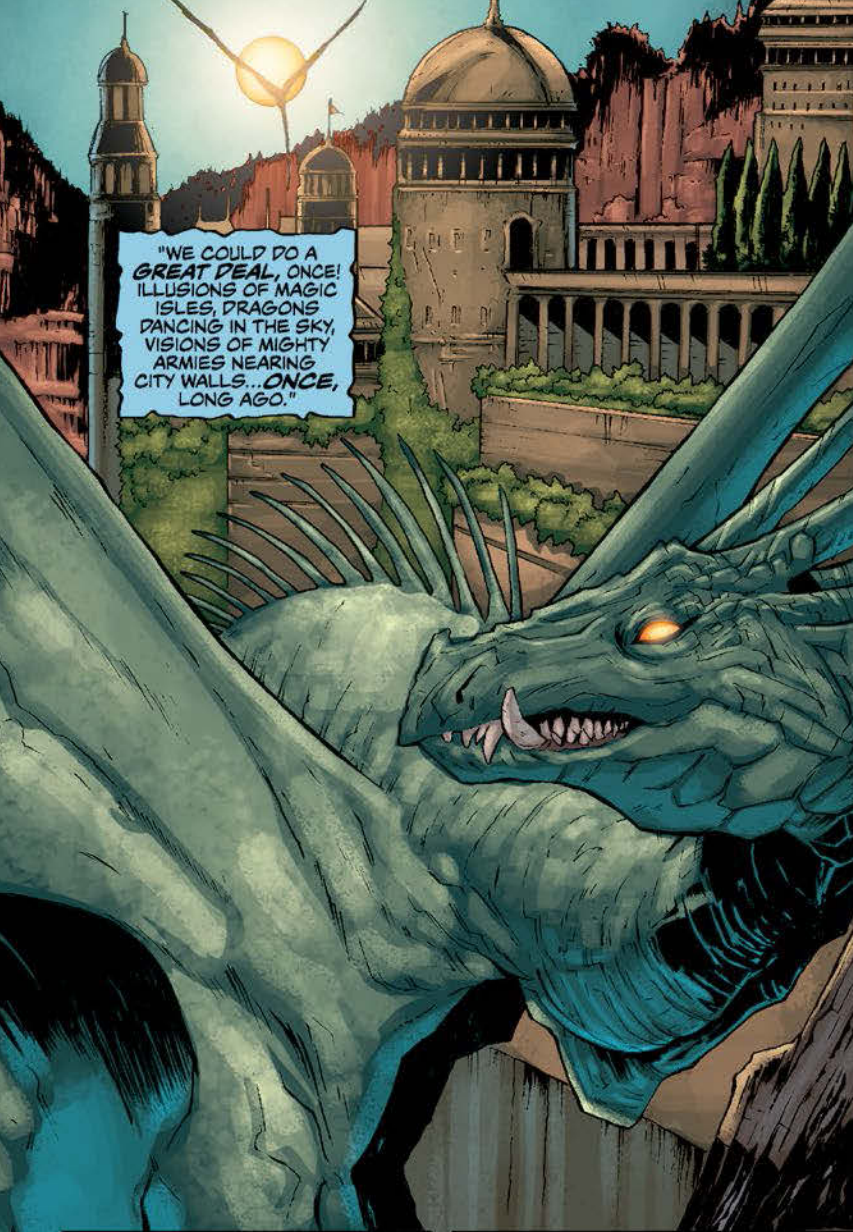
NOT SURE
I GET WHAT
YOU MEAN,
ADDARIO.

BOUND TO
BE A CERTAIN
TRUTH IN THERE
SOMEWHERE,
THOUGH.










"WE COULD DO A GREAT DEAL, ONCE! ILLUSIONS OF MAGIC ISLES, DRAGONS DANCING IN THE SKY, VISIONS OF MIGHTY ARMIES NEARING CITY WALLS...ONCE, LONG AGO."

AS THE WORLD HAS **CHANGED** OUR POWERS HAVE **WANED**...AND OUR NUMBERS HAVE **DWINDLED**.

WE ARE MORE "FOX" THAN "VULPESSE" NOW.



YET EVEN THE **SMALLEST** AMONG US CAN FOOL YOUR **PRIMITIVE** HUMAN SENSES.



FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I'M ACTUALLY GLAD SOMEONE DECEIVED ME.

YOU STOOD AGAINST ME, BUT YOU ARE NOT MY FOE.

FOR YOU ALSO STOOD AGAINST THE BRUTALITY AND STUPIDITY OF MEN. YOU FELT AND THOUGHT WHERE THEY BUT FEARED AND HATED.

AND AS YOUR PRIZE, YOU MAY TOUCH MY FACE.

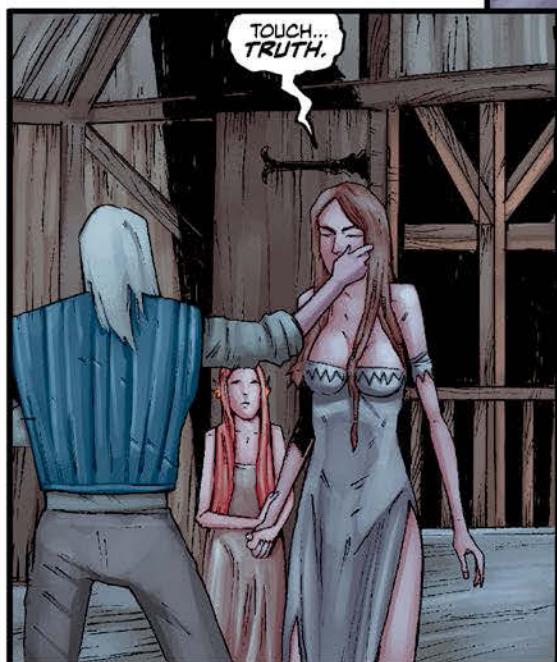




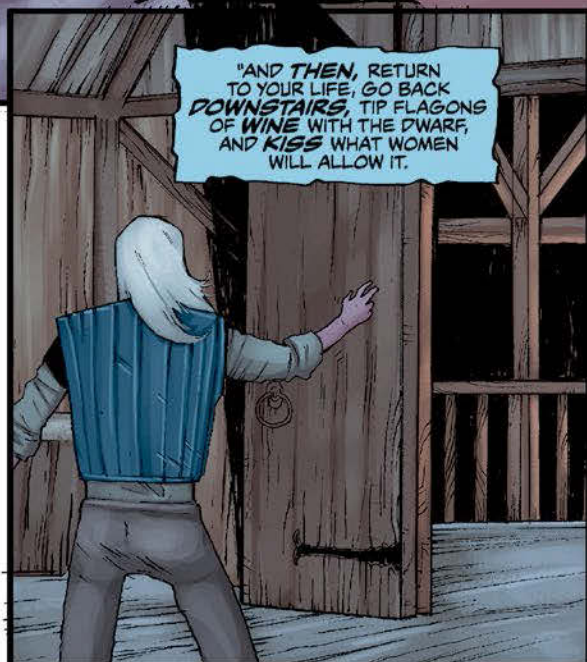
COME,
WITCHER.



TOUCH
THE OLDEST
OF WORLDS. TOUCH
THE ELDEST OF
SECRETS.



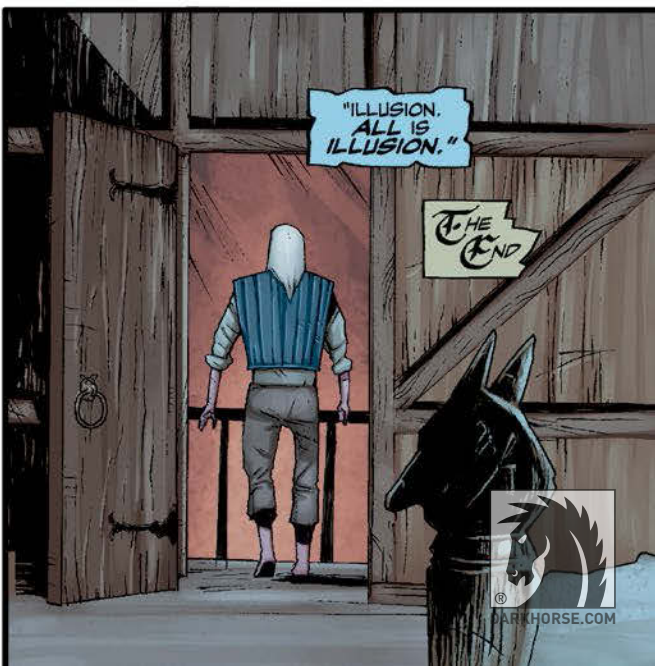
TOUCH...
TRUTH.



"AND THEN, RETURN
TO YOUR LIFE, GO BACK
DOWNSTAIRS, TIP FLAGONS
OF WINE WITH THE DWARF,
AND KISS WHAT WOMEN
WILL ALLOW IT.



"BUT FOREVER
REMEMBER, GERALT.
REMEMBER.



"ILLUSION.
ALL IS
ILLUSION."

THE
END



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An interview with Paul Tobin, writer of the *Witcher* comics, and Borys Pugacz-Muraszkiewicz, lead writer at CD Projekt RED.

Paul, what's your favorite moment in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* so far? Also, did *Wild Hunt*, as a game, influence *Fox Children* in any way?

PAUL: There are a lot of favorite moments, really. Is that cheating? I enjoyed standing atop a lighthouse and looking out over the shoreline, the ocean, a glorious view, and knowing that I could go anywhere that I could see in that grand vista. In some ways, though, just hanging out with Triss or Zoltan makes me the happiest. As far as influences when I'm writing *Witcher*, I think the main influence is, without a doubt, Sapkowski's novels and short stories, though the game did focus me a bit more on Geralt's penchant for wit and his curious mix of being pithy and grim, as well as his constant eye for the ladies and his as-you-like-it sense of justice.

Borys, you normally write dialogue for video games—what's the difference between writing for an interactive medium and a non-interactive one? What do comic books allow in terms of narrative that games don't?

BORYS: Once upon a time—no, all right, more like nine years ago—I remember sitting down with the writers on the first *Witcher* and compiling a set of guidelines we would follow in writing the dialogue for the first game in the franchise. And a key point in those guidelines stated that we would strive to make the dialogue akin to that in comic books—in terms of economy, masking exposition with emotion, tidbits of flavor . . . qualities that at first glance seemed difficult to reconcile, but that we've striven to retain throughout the life of the franchise.

It was actually those discussions and points that helped us arrive at Geralt's rather abbreviated speech patterns, where he often drops subject pronouns or helping verbs, or simply employs terse or curt language. It's a style that's bled over onto other characters, as it has come to sound natural to our ears for certain types of figures and reflective of actual speech patterns.

In terms of differences, I guess I'd mention one key point—in the comic books we get to make every line precise, applicable in detail and completely matching the art, which is available to us in near-final form by the time we're finalizing the dialogue. Not so in the video games, for a couple of reasons. First off, we're often working blind, which is to say the visuals are simply not available by the time we're finalizing the script and taking it off to be recorded. Also, at least in our games, the dialogue has invariably been deeply nonlinear, which means that a line from which many conversation segments sprout, or upon which multiple conversation segments converge, has to accommodate all of those input or output options. Both of these factors mean compromising on the detail in a line, adopting something general where something specific might have served some conversation segment better. I can't count the number of times I've lamented a generalization I had to do for these very reasons, or the number of times I would have liked to add lines just so I could retain some detail. But in games that are already huge by design, you've got to stop somewhere; you can't keep adding lines ad infinitum. Those are just the breaks.

Paul, if you compare it to the entire comic book landscape, is there anything unique about the *Witcher* universe? If you had to name one thing, why should people choose Geralt's adventures over other dark fantasy stories?

PAUL: Well, I'm a character writer at heart, so Geralt's character is what draws me the most. When reading the novels and playing the games, what really struck me is that he seems more human than almost any other character I've ever encountered. So many fictional characters have one or two emotions, but Geralt has humor to him, and he's grim, and he's thoughtful, and he thinks in terms of the future, of other characters' needs. He's heartbroken. He has hope for

the future. He has a great love for Yennefer and an entirely different love for Triss, and yet he's still got coin for a courtesan. It's that range that I find fascinating, and it's echoed in his abilities as a fighter, with his signs, his training, the way they intermix. It's intriguing to read, or to play, or to write.

Borys, say I've yet to play *The Witcher*—what's the benefit of reading the comic books before playing the game?

BORYS: The comic books individually are an investment of, say, fifteen to twenty minutes per issue—if you do more than glance, if you decipher the art, scan for details, go back to reexamine, etc. They're incomparably less of a time investment than any of the novels or games. Honestly, I can't think of a better shorthand intro to the protagonist, the world, and the lore than the comic books. Geralt, I think, is remarkably well fleshed out in the comics, and we've set him in adventures populated with sidekicks as colorful and varied as in the games, spiced with dilemmas characteristic of the franchise in all media.

The comic books also, I think, contribute to the idea that the character and the world he inhabits go well beyond the franchise in its embodiments to date—beyond the stories told in the games, beyond the short stories, beyond the five-novel saga. There's this idea that what you see is only ever the tip of an iceberg. The comic books reinforce the notion that not all of Geralt's life has been chronicled yet, that they fill in some of the holes in the timeline of his life. Though scripted and specific, they function like the open game world—there's this guy, he has a certain set of values, lives by certain principles, kills monsters, all while traversing this vast world is his way of life. So, jump in and roam around the world with him.

Paul, was it easier to write *Fox Children* after creating *House of Glass*? Did you have to learn to think like Geralt, or was it love at first sight and everything was smooth from day one?

PAUL: Honestly, I think having played the games first helped. I was already in the Geralt frame of mind. It still took some nudging here and there, but after reading so many novels and playing the second game, Geralt was already in my head space.

Borys and Paul, bonus question from fans: why the hell does Geralt shout sign names when casting them?

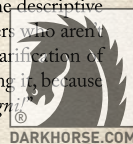
BORYS: We were actually surprised to see that in the first comic book scripts that came through to us from Dark Horse for approval. I'll admit that at first I really didn't like it. But it seems like one of those things that's specific to the medium, or specific to the differences between the media.

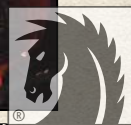
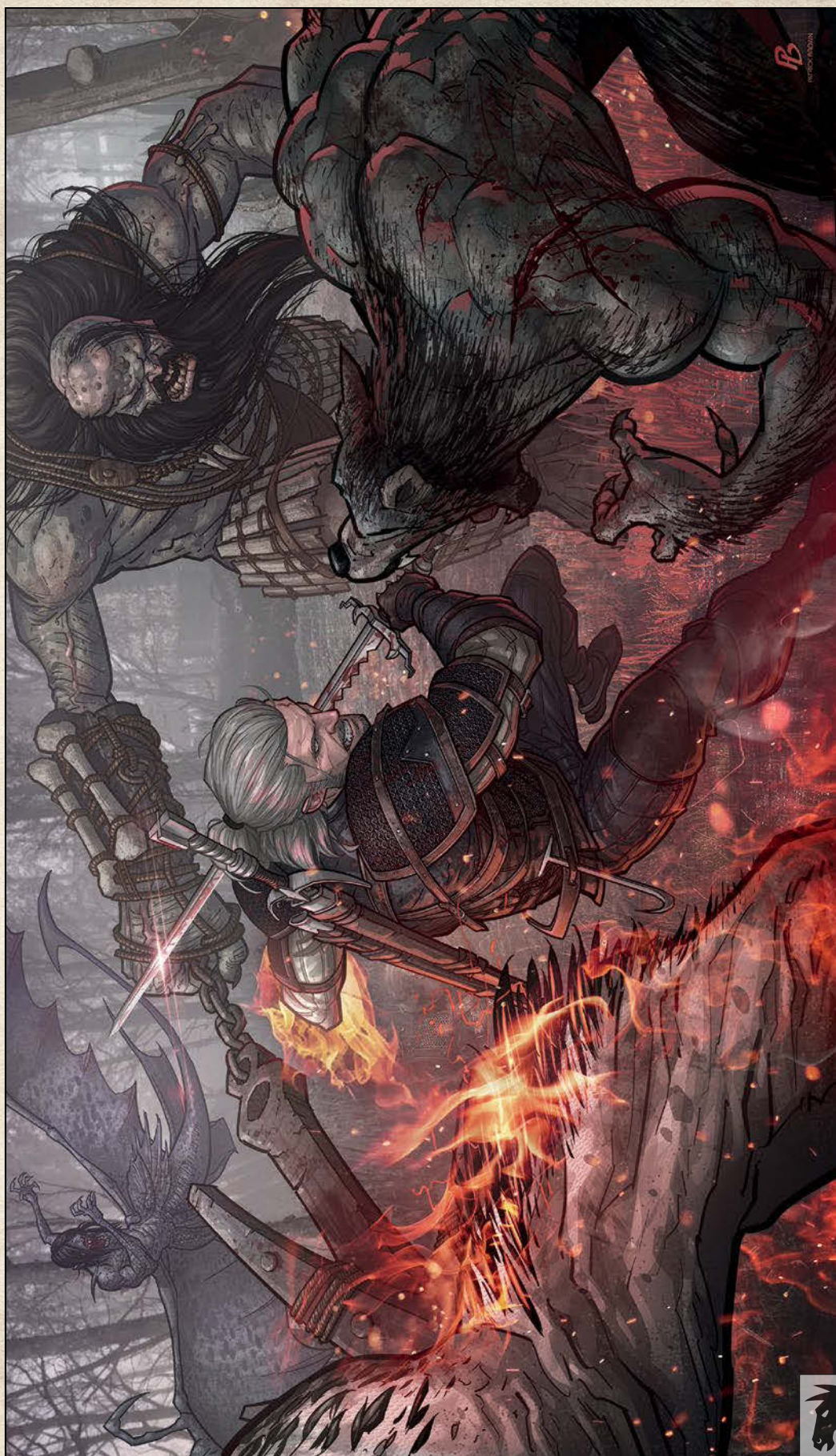
We definitely don't need Geralt to do that in the games, because while playing, you are Geralt, you cycle through the signs (which are really just part of the player character's retained knowledge, all appropriately labeled and symbolized), choose what you want to cast, and fire away.

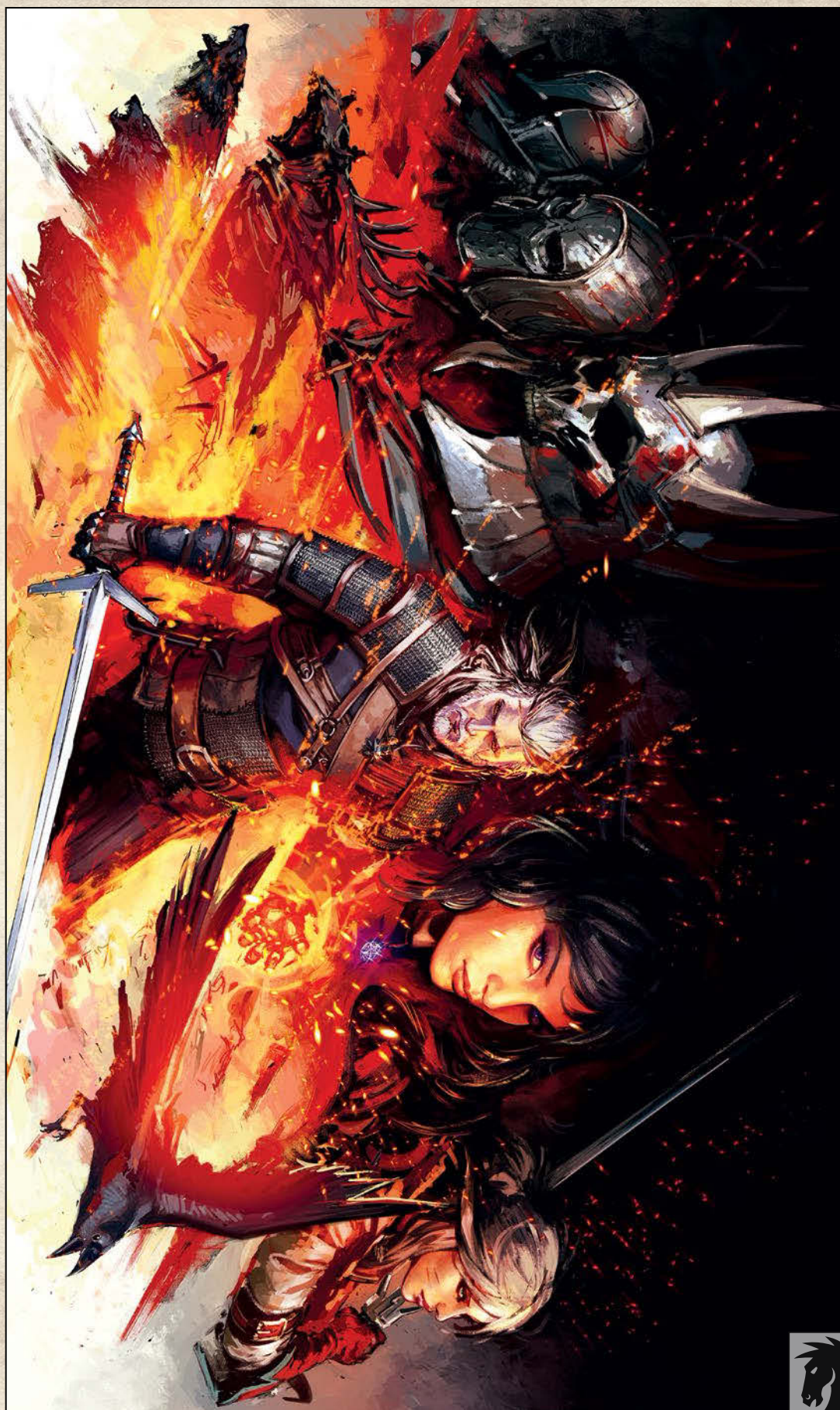
Not the case in the comic books. I mean, I suppose we could have restricted ourselves to just showing the relevant symbol traced in the air to indicate what sign Geralt was casting, but that in turn would have required us to include a key somewhere detailing the corresponding name for each symbol and perhaps the sign's nature. That just seemed too involved.

So we went with it—and I have to say it's grown on me. It seems right for the medium, and it will stay. I'd never advocate adopting it for the games, but I'm all right with Geralt in the comic books being this madman who shouts strange elven words as he casts minor spells mid melee. Actually, if it makes it any easier, think of them as spell incantations—suitably terse because, after all, they are Geralt's.

PAUL: Ha! I love this question! There's a very practical reason, actually. When you're playing the game, you know what sign you're using, and when you're reading the novels, it's right there in the descriptive text, but it can get lost in the comics, especially to readers who aren't familiar with Geralt's capabilities, so it's in there for clarification of what you're seeing. Also, in my mind, I like Geralt saying it because it's like he's screaming, "Take *that*, you piece of scum! Igni!"







Pinup art by Yama Orce.



Pinup art by Simone de Paolis.









THE WITCHER[®]

FOX CHILDREN

Geral't's journey leads him aboard a ship of fools, renegades, and criminals—but some passengers are more dangerous than others, and one hides a heinous secret that could lead crew and passengers to a bitter and hideous fate at the hand of a vengeful fox mother!

Written by Eisner Award winner Paul Tobin and illustrated by rising comics star Joe Querio, this action-packed horror fantasy set in the world of the blockbuster video game series *The Witcher* is sure to astonish die-hard fans and new readers alike!

GRAPHIC NOVEL/ACTION ADVENTURE

"Tobin has the world and characters down pat now; this is an authentic Witcher story through and through. If you've been enjoying The Witcher III, I'd highly recommend this series."

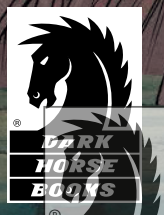
—BLOODY DISGUSTING

"The mystery behind the illusions is perfect for Paul Tobin's writing style because now everything that has taken place can be significant when the truth of what's occurring is revealed. As a Witcher fan, I'm very pleased with the direction and pace of this series and can't wait to see what's next."

—HULKING REVIEWER



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